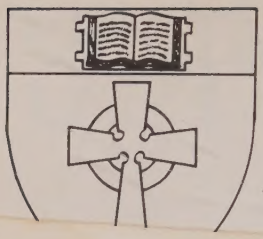
ORDERS AND UNITY

By BISHOP GORE



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ORDERS AND UNITY

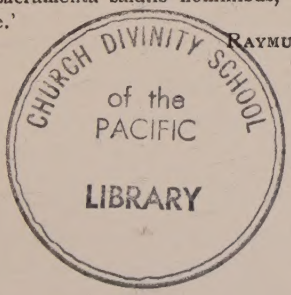
BY

CHARLES GORE, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.

HON. FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD
BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM

'Quia vita spiritualis consistit in caritate et unitate, ideo convenientissime debuit ordinari, ut homines vice Christi administrent sacramenta salutis hominibus, ut magis fierent unum inter se.'

RAYMUND OF SABUNDE



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PREFACE

Baron von Hügel in his work on *The Mystical Element in Religion* has recently expounded to us anew and with profound insight the relation of the institutional, the intellectual, and the experimental or mystical elements in Christianity. If there is any one who is irritated at the very idea of a writer maintaining that the episcopate is an essential constituent of Christianity, I hope he will read von Hügel before indulging his irritation further. Certainly I should wish to identify myself with this wise man's words.

My motive in writing this book has been the frequency with which it is asserted that recent criticism—dating from Lightfoot's essay on the Christian Ministry—has weakened and rendered untenable the position that the episcopate is the necessary and divinely given link of continuity and cohesion in the church universal. I had published a book on this position twenty-one years ago (*The Church and the Ministry*,

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Longmans), to which, as much larger and more comprehensive than anything that I can now attempt, I must still refer on many points connected with the ministry. But I determined to think the whole subject through afresh ; and the results of this attempt were presented in some lectures given in the Birmingham Cathedral in the Lent of this year, which formed the basis of this book.

As a result of my fresh inquiry into the matter I feel more strongly than ever that the verdict on the effect of recent criticism which I have just referred to is by no means in accordance with the facts. I am sure that, with the laudable desire not to be 'bigoted' or 'narrow', we are in serious danger of underestimating, or even ignoring, a fundamental law of the church's corporate and continuous life. Neither in face of the popular undenominational tendency, nor in face of the Roman claim, nor in view of the wide movement in human society towards social reconstruction, are we making the best of the position which God has given to us Anglicans to maintain—the position which is best described as a liberal catholicism.

Archbishop Trench speaks of 'the hours

which we rescue and redeem' for the writing of a book. Certainly I have found it very difficult to rescue and redeem the hours necessary for preparing and writing even so small a book as this. I am painfully conscious that I might have put my matter much better. But to keep the book back to rewrite it would have caused a year's delay; and the improvement, as far as I can judge, would have been in the exposition, not in the thought. So I have decided to let the book go as it stands.

C. BIRMINGHAM:

All Saints' Eve, 1909.

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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARIES

THERE can be no question of the pressing necessity under which all Christian bodies lie at the present moment to think out their principles with regard to the constitution of the church and the ministry. And the question presents itself with special urgency to us of the English Church. There are proposals and movements making themselves felt among us in the direction of reunion with the old historical communions of Catholic Christendom, western and eastern : and other proposals in the direction for union with Protestant bodies. All such proposals are found at once to involve questions of the constitution of the church and of the conditions of a valid Christian ministry.

Again, there is a strong and persistent demand that we should set all such questions aside as of secondary importance by assenting to the 'undenominational' principle, that is,

the principle that the real life of Christianity is independent of all questions of organization : that the real Christian should combine with all men who seem to be seeking the objects for which Jesus Christ lived and died, and esteem very lightly the sectional questions which keep men apart in different ecclesiastical bodies.

Once more, within our own communion, as well as outside it, there is a movement to assign more and more freely to the laity functions which have been supposed in past history to belong only to the clergy. All these movements, which I have very roughly characterized, raise directly and at once the question : What do we believe about the church of Christ and its ministry ?

Did Jesus Christ found a church on earth at all, or was He, as some modern critics in Germany and France would have us believe, simply a prophet who proclaimed the immediate coming of the divine kingdom with the accompanying destruction of the present world-order, and made almost no provision for the insignificant interval before this great catastrophe ? Or if He was the founder of a church, must we hold that there are certain features

or principles of its organization which are unalterable because they have the explicit sanction of the Lord of the church for all ages? Or did He leave all questions of organization to the church to settle for itself? And, if so, what is the church and what in fact has it settled? And what claim upon the allegiance of each of its members have the distinctive rulings of the church?

These and the like questions are being constantly raised: but, I fear, very little considered. Rhetorical appeals or one-sided statements are much more commonly to be heard or read than any careful consideration either of the theory of the Christian church and ministry or of the facts of their history. In this, as in other respects, we are in imminent peril of drifting.[1] In particular we English churchmen do not seem to be making any serious attempt to form a corporate mind among ourselves on these important subjects. And we must not overlook the fact that within our own portion of the Christian church those whose principles lead them to desire reunion with the ancient Catholic

[1] See below, cap. vii, where I have sought to enlarge on this peril of drifting.

churches and those whose principles lead them to look towards the Protestant communities are pulling asunder. Yet if there is anything in the special position of the Anglican communion which we are justified in believing to be the work of God's providence, it is the combination of Catholic principles of doctrine and order with certain fundamental features of the Reformation movement, especially its appeal to scripture. The Anglican communion has a distinctive duty or opportunity, which is to realize and express a catholicism which is scriptural; which will admit nothing as essential in doctrine or order which is not verified on appeal to the documents of the New Testament. This is our charter of freedom. We cannot be content merely to appeal to the teaching of the church, without reference to the supreme standard. The fundamental question for us is the question whether really Christ and His apostolic interpreters laid down any law or principle of church organization. And if the Church of England is to hold together and attain a growing measure of coherence, and if further it is to become more intelligible to other Christians, and fulfil the vocation which

men who are not of our communion are constantly found assigning to us as a centre of reunion for divided Christendom, there is laid upon us a very special obligation at the present moment to reconsider the ultimate principles of Christian unity.

I need, therefore, make no apology for the attempt to treat the class of questions which concern the constitution of the church and the ministry, in strict deference indeed to historical science and the criticism of the New Testament and other early documents, but on a scale and in a manner which may commend itself to the ordinary educated reader who has no more equipment for forming a judgement on these subjects than is involved in an intelligent interest in the position and work of the church.

I

I alluded just now to some modern critics—Schweitzer in Germany and Loisy in France are the most brilliant and uncompromising of them[1]—who would have us believe that our Lord was merely a prophet proclaiming the

[1] See below, p. 21 n.

kingdom to come and the end of the world, who made almost no provision for the intermediate period in the world. Apparently we are to believe that He did indeed send out His disciples as heralds of the kingdom, but that He did not train them to be pastors of souls. The whole conception of Him as the 'pastor pastorum' they would regard as unhistorical or a reflection back of later ideas. I cannot regard this as anything better than a one-sided paradox. That He did train men to be pastors—rulers and feeders of His flock—is taught explicitly in various ways, which we shall have occasion to examine later on, in three of the four Gospels.[1] And even in S. Mark,[2] to which these critics chiefly appeal, there is the intimation that the vineyard of the Lord (Israel) was to have other appointed husbandmen when those then in charge (the chief priests and scribes and elders) had been 'destroyed' for their rejection and murder of the Son. And a further intimation is conveyed in the brief parable of the master of the house who, before

[1] S. Matt. 16^{18-19}, 24^{45}, 28^{19-20}; S. Luke 12^{42}; S. John 20^{21-23}, 21^{15-17}.

[2] S. Mark 12^{9}.

he goes abroad, gives authority to his servants to fill their various offices in his household till he return.[1] This implies that the Lord left behind Him when He went away responsible persons in charge of His 'household'.

Various interpretations have been put upon the fact, and we shall have to consider them. But I will take it as historically true at starting that Christ did, in some sense, as Christians of all kinds have admitted, train men to be put in charge of their fellow-men in His name, and that He took the risks of this method of action. I think this fundamental fact needs a good deal more consideration than is commonly given it.

We will begin our inquiry by recalling to memory a passage in the Gospels in which, as clearly as anywhere, our Lord indicated His fundamental motive and principle in dealing with the moral needs of men, and that in special connexion with the mission of the Twelve.[2]

[1] S. Mark 13^{34}.

[2] S. Matt. 9^{35}–10^{1}. Cf. S. Mark 6^{34}: 'And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.' In S. Mark these words occur just

'And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest. And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.'

What is here represented as moving our Lord's compassion is the fact, plain to observation, that men need shepherds and have them not. And here and elsewhere He makes manifest His intention to provide for this vast human need. The words used by the evangelists about our Lord's feeling, which must be based upon words used by Himself, recall a great body of language in the Old Testament. It is that the congregation of the Lord may not be 'as sheep not having a shepherd' that Moses prays God to appoint a successor to himself,

after the return of the Twelve, when our Lord was just about to teach them, by the Feeding of the Five Thousand, that out of the slenderest stock they could feed the greatest multitude. In S. Luke 10^2 the phrase about the harvest and the labourers occurs in connexion with the sending of the Seventy.

and is directed to lay his hand upon the head of Joshua, and put of his honour upon him, that, with the assistance of the priest to inquire for him of the Lord, he may become, in Moses' place, the leader of God's people.[1] Again and again we hear the complaint renewed that God's people are 'as sheep that have no shepherd',[2] because their appointed shepherds neglect or maltreat them. In the Old Testament literature it is the king, and not the priest, or prophet, that is called the shepherd,[3] though in passages where God Himself is described as the shepherd of His people the word embraces all that is comprised in the ideas of protection and guidance and provision. The word, in fact, is, in the Old Testament, a synonym for king, whether Jewish or heathen, and a similar use of the word is familiar in Greek literature. But when our Lord discovered man's need of a shepherd and made provision for the shepherding of the flock, He gave the use of the word a new direction.

[1] Numb. 27^{15-23}.

[2] 1 Kings 22^{17}; Is. 56^{11}; Jer. 50^{6}; Ezek. 34.

[3] Jer. 17^{16} is perhaps an exception: but the reading is doubtful: see LXX, and Driver's Commentary. In Zech. 11, 13^{7}, however, the prophet is certainly commissioned as a shepherd to feed the flock, in place of its worthless shepherd-rulers.

It was not of military leading or civil administration that He was thinking, but of that care of men which, in Christianity, has been called 'pastoral' care, and which is associated specially with the office of the ministers of Christ.

Our Lord then looked out on mankind with His eyes of compassion, and discerned their state—that they were 'harassed and cast down as sheep that have no shepherd'. He saw them diseased in body and mind, sinful and ignorant, overburdened, misguided, and unbefriended. He knew that He had in Himself the needed power and resources to remedy all their ills. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised.' 'Come unto me,' He cried, 'all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd.'

But He had no illusions. He knew that, for the most part, they would ignore or refuse His help. 'Few there be that find the strait way.'

'Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.' His experience is summed up in the parable of the sower. The seed of the word of life falls where it is at once carried off by intruders; or where the soil is too thin for it to grow; or where it is choked by rival growths. Only a portion falls into good soil where it can bear fruit. 'He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God.' Of His dealings with those who received Him we have moving examples given us, in His treatment of the apostles, and other individuals such as Zaccheus, and the woman that was a sinner, and Mary Magdalene; the woman of Samaria, and the man born blind, and the family at Bethany. These are types of the humanity that will believe on Him, and receive the full reward. There are multitudes of others who have faith enough to receive physical healing, but give no evidence of any deeper want or fuller faith.

So our Lord stands over against the world which so sorely needs Him, and which is in part susceptible of His redemptive power; but,

for the greater part, is careless or preoccupied or reluctant or hostile. And He teaches us by word and example how He would deal with such a world; and He gives intimations that He is not unmindful of the larger world which lay outside His mission 'in the days of his flesh'. 'The gospel must be preached unto all the nations.' 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.' But He makes it quite evident that it is not in His mind to deal directly, as He then was, as man among men, with the large problem of the world's redemption. 'I am not sent,' he said, 'but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' And even with them He is to deal in the main not directly but through others. He is as one evidencing his goodwill and power to redeem and then withdrawing. He withdraws upon the small circle of His disciples, and especially upon those whom He will send—the Twelve. He has called them and He trains them under his careful and loving eye. He shows them how to view the world, and how to deal with men and what to expect of them. He prepares them for His death and His resurrection, and for their work when He is gone. We may recall Frederick

Denison Maurice's impression of the Gospels: 'He never separates the thought of training them in their office from that of performing His own. . . . If we called the four Gospels "the institution of a Christian ministry", we might not go very far wrong or lose sight of many of their essential qualities.' [1]

And at last the great commission was spoken: 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' 'Go ye and make disciples of all the nations.' We in our position to-day in the succession of the generations can look back over the experience of all the centuries, and perhaps there is nothing which ought to astonish us more than the fixed divine intention that men, for all their proved untrustworthiness, men and no other agents shall be God's ministers, God's vice-gerents to men.

At the end of last year, at the occurrence of the earthquake at Messina, and on the opposite shore of Calabria, the conscience of men was staggered by so terrible an act of God. The shock to faith does not seem to have been as deeply felt as it was a hundred and fifty years earlier at the occurrence of the much less horrible

[1] See *Kingdom of Christ* (ed. 3), ii, p. 118.

earthquake at Lisbon. But still such a terrible event could not but cause much searching of heart: much inquiry as to what we shall believe about the God of nature. And it was surely a good thing for men to be forced to realize that the faith in God as love—the belief that the power in nature which creates and controls and absorbs us is the power of a loving being—is not an obvious and self-evident truth; but a venture of human faith, reasonably possible only through Christ and his passion. But without in any way depreciating the wonder that is stirred in us by the destructive forces in nature, there is, I venture to say, a far deeper astonishment which comes over us when we consider how God has, from the beginning of human existence, made men his vice-gerents and ministers towards their fellow men—to say nothing now of the wider control given them in nature—and has refused to take back the ordering of the kingdom into His own hands, in spite of man's almost continuous unfaithfulness, and, we would venture to say, his proved inadequacy to the tremendous task. Overlook, I would say, any known district of humanity. Think of the plagues which depress and curse

and divide and weaken humankind. Then begin to inquire how much of this is man's fault; how little of it belongs to the inevitable nature of things; how much of it might have been otherwise, and ought to have been otherwise—would have been otherwise, but for man's selfishness and greed, or narrowness and envy, or stupidity and sloth. Look over the world and the church: think of the facts, and then of the causes of the facts. You will experience a feeling of dismay in contemplating the misplaced confidence (as it would seem to us) which God has yet so unrelentingly imposed on His creature man, to make him and to keep him at every stage of his history, both in church and in state, the shepherd of his brother men.

Of course, to make the thought endurable, we have to fly for refuge to the consideration of a world wider than this world—a world where God, the personal Father of each human soul, can rectify all the crying wrongs that men, whether kings or parents or priests or prophets, whether men of great power or of little, have inflicted on their brother men—a world where God unmakes, but to remake, the souls which have been spoiled, not by their own

fault, but by the niggardliness, or violence, or carelessness of their brethren. But still the contemplation of the almost boundless lending-out of power by God to man over man—to parents over children, to the strong over the weak—so often, as far as this world goes at least, to the manifest ruin of his God-given endowments, is the most staggering of all contemplations. And whatever other effect it has upon us, at least it suggests to every one set in authority or office, in church or state or family or school, an almost overwhelming sense of responsibility. The words ring in our ears: 'Because, being officers of his kingdom, ye did not judge aright, neither kept the law, nor walked after the counsel of God. Awfully and swiftly shall he come upon you; because a stern judgement befalleth them that be in high place. For the man of low estate may be pardoned in mercy, but mighty men shall be searched out mightily.'[1]

But we are here concerned not directly with personal responsibilities, but with the theory of the Christian Ministry. I am persuaded that the main obstacle which any theory of minis-

[1] Wisd. 6^{4-8}.

terial authority and commission, officially transmitted, has to encounter lies in the fact that 'the unworthiness of the ministers' has so often in history prejudiced the minds of men against the very idea of their office. It is for this reason that I have called attention at starting to what seems to be a fundamental principle in the divine government of the world—the principle that God governs men through men in spite of their unworthiness.

Our Lord, more perhaps than any other teacher of men, had under observation the failure of priesthoods and offices of trust, in temporal things and spiritual. He was subject to no illusions about human trustworthiness. He knew all the misuse of the office of stewardship, 'the power of the keys.' He knew the desolating havoc that has been wrought by those who misused their trust,—who 'took away the key of knowledge'. 'Woe unto you,' He cried, 'scribes and Pharisees and lawyers!' And yet, in reconstituting the people of God on a new basis, in founding the new Israel, He deliberately again commits to men the powers which He knew to be so liable to abuse. He contemplates in the stewards of His household

after He was gone violence and debauchery and apathy and unfaithfulness. He contemplates failure of faith on the largest scale.[1] And yet He made men stewards of His household. He gave them, according to one report, the keys of the kingdom not of earth only but of heaven, the binding and loosing power, with a heavenly sanction, over their fellow men, and, according to another report, the power to forgive and retain their sins.

We shall come back upon these words and examine them more carefully. Here I am only concerned with a general principle. I want to make it evident at starting that it was with the weakness of the human instrument full in view that Jesus Christ entrusted to men the spiritual charge over their fellows.

II

There is another principle on which practically the whole of historical Christendom would be agreed, and which I will take for granted here, namely, that our Lord Himself set the standard of the pastoral office: that He was 'the great

[1] S. Matt. 24^{48-9}, 25^{26}, S. Luke 12^{45}, 18^{8}.

shepherd of the sheep'; and that, whatever He willed to be done by those to whom He entrusted His household, what they were to do and be was to carry out what He had done and been. Their pastorate was to be based on His, and to find in Him the source of its inspiration and power. What then would Christ have us understand by His pastoral function?

Men all the world over, who have felt their own weakness and insufficiency to live as they would, however crude or undeveloped their ideals of life, have looked outside themselves for help to *prophets*, that is, to men who, they felt, could speak to them for the God in whom they believed or were ready to believe: and to *priests* who 'knew the manner of the God of their country'[1], and could, by their rites, reconcile them to this God or maintain them in His favour; and to *kings* or leaders who could keep them together and defend them and do them justice. In particular, in Israel, the prophet and the priest and the king had been the three familiar central figures in the national life. And Christ, the crown of the aspiration of Israel, was from the first seen to have com-

[1] 2 Kings 17^{26}.

bined and fulfilled in his single person the functions of prophet and priest and king. These words do in fact sum up His activity for man's redemption.

(*a*) As Son of God, indeed, Jesus Christ was much more than a prophet. But He was all that the prophet was, and as a prophet He was received. 'We know', said Nicodemus, 'that thou art a teacher come from God.' 'Sir,' said the Samaritan woman, 'I perceive that thou art a prophet.' 'A great prophet is risen up among us,' said the popular voice. 'This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.' That He was 'a prophet mighty in word and in deed before God and all the people,' was the simplest impression made upon the disciples. And surely no teacher of man —prophet or philosopher—ever exhibited in so impressive a form, with such tranquil strength, the consciousness of the power of truth, delivered as a message from God, to transform and redeem human life. Because He saw men 'as sheep having no shepherd', He proceeded, says S. Mark, 'to teach them many things'.[1]

[1] I have used the word 'prophet' as covering all that Jesus was as 'a teacher come from God'. The critics of the school that

He exhibited the profoundest confidence in the capacity of the ordinary labouring man, without special education, if only the will be good, to apprehend the highest truth about God and man, about human destiny and sin and redemption, about what is right and wrong in religious practices. And He made it impressively evident that error about God and human life was disastrous, and truth only redemptive; that it was of the greatest importance that men should gain true ideas instead of false on the greatest

I have referred to would say that Jesus was a prophet indeed, as one come to announce with authority the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom, and to call men to repent: but they will hardly admit Him to be a teacher in any other sense. See Schweitzer *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (Tübingen, 1906) pp. 349 ff., and Loisy *L'Évangile et l'Église* (Paris, 1903) p. 38; and cp. Sanday *Life of Christ in Recent Research* (Oxford, 1907) pp. 84 ff. I do not think that with any show of reason it can be denied that Jesus was a prophet in the fuller sense in which the term has been used. In S. Mark's Gospel much more diversified and fuller teaching is referred to than is actually recorded in that Gospel alone. Jesus is said to have 'spoken the word', 'taught the people', 'taught the people many things'. 'As he was wont, he taught them again', 'I was daily with you in the temple teaching'. He was to His disciples *Rabbi*—a teacher. As a teacher who 'teaches the way of God in truth' He is asked a question about the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar. Mark $2^{2\ 13}$, 6^{34}, 9^{5}, 11^{21}, 10^{1}, 14^{49}, 12^{14}. There is, in fact, a wide activity of Christ as spiritual teacher implied: something much more than the preaching of an apocalyptic prophet.

subjects. Accordingly, wide and ready acceptance for His teaching was unhesitatingly sacrificed to the requirements of its purity. No teacher of the common people ever more conspicuously preferred spiritual truth to popularity and success. After a time He even adopted a method of teaching by parables which should ensure the sifting out of the genuine spirits, who would search for and ponder the inner meaning in a popular tale, from the careless mass. Only he that had ears to hear should hear.[1]

In His indifference to popularity, Jesus Christ was following in the way of the true prophets of the Old Testament. They too had been in constant opposition to the people, even while they were revered or feared by them as men of God, because they spoke to reluctant ears an unpalatable message. They too knew that they must proclaim the truth whether men would hear or whether they would forbear; and that in any case the word of God would not fail of

[1] This is a most unmistakably genuine saying of our Lord, and in the contexts where it occurs it goes a long way to prove the interpretation of our Lord's method of teaching in parables which is given in the Gospels to be historical, as against many recent critics.

its effects—would not return unto God void. But nowhere do we feel as in the Gospels the sifting, discriminating power of truth.

And it is very important to emphasize this because the whole method of Christ, based upon His profound perception of the ultimate power of the true spiritual idea, conveyed as a message from God and apprehended by the single mind, has often been quite forgotten by the church. Popular religions of all kinds have commonly been popular because they consisted in religious customs and rites which were familiar and involved no mental effort, but left the minds and ideas of the people alone. And constantly during and since what is called the conversion of the empire, the church has fallen into the habit of the world, and suffered men to enter the church and adopt its rites and ceremonies, with their minds, their ideas, almost untouched. Religion has been made easy, and its lifting power correspondingly lost, by neglect of the principle of Christ that only spiritual truth really apprehended is redemptive: that the will and heart cannot be rightly trained while no claim is made upon the mind, to change and deepen and elevate its ideas.

Exactly the same weakness has been apparent at a later date in established churches generally. The penetrating demand of the truth is sacrificed to popular adhesion. And to-day there is a cheap philanthropic gospel, unaccompanied by any careful or exacting doctrine about God and sin and redemption, which plays a great part in popular Protestantism in England and America, and exhibits exactly the same weakness.

Our Lord then, first of all, was the prophet —'the truth' as well as 'the way'. He perceived that any misconception about God or about human nature weighs down humanity and keeps it from redemption. He saw that the official teachers of His people were indifferent and even hostile to the truth. 'They had taken away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves and them that were entering in they hindered.'[1] He pressed upon men with authority the searching spiritual claim of the truth. He made them feel that enlightenment of mind, change of ideas, is the first necessity of spiritual progress, and that redemption is by spiritual knowledge.

Christ is the shepherd of men, then, because

[1] Luke 11^{52}.

He is prophet. But side by side with the prophet had stood the priest.

(*b*) In Israel the original function of the priest had been to declare the will of God to those who inquired it. The priest was also the teacher; so the ideal had remained till the end. 'The priest's lips should keep knowledge,' says Malachi, 'and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.' But popular religion, in Israel as elsewhere, tended to make the priest simply the celebrant of rites, joyous or propitiatory, which were believed to secure and maintain the favour of God. Thus there had been in Israel, in the greatest days of prophecy, a continual protest maintained by the prophets in the name of the Lord against this whole conception of salvation by rites and ceremonies. No passages in the prophets are more familiar than those which declare that nothing can enable us to approach God, or to please Him, but a character like His. Therefore 'bring no more vain oblations'. 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil?'

Plainly, however, the idea of corporate and

symbolical worship is in no necessary contradiction to the most searching moral requirement: and in the later prophets, such as Ezekiel, the two institutions of prophecy and priesthood, the two streams of influence, are brought into a unity which gains for itself fullest expression in the psalms of the Israelite sanctuary. This conciliation our Lord accepts and sanctions. With all His stern denunciations of the contemporary leaders of religion—His stern denunciations of the misuse of the authority given to those who sat in Moses' seat to teach and discipline in God's name—there mingles no single touch of the note familiar in the old prophets; no disparagement of the ritual and ceremonial of the temple, at which our Lord was, we gather, a regular attendant, fulfilling the pious duty of the Jewish layman.

No one of his contemporaries, however, would ever have dreamed of describing Jesus of Nazareth as a priest. How did this attribution of priesthood arise? The idea of the vicarious sacrifice by which He had redeemed His people, and won for them their new standing-ground before God, took possession of the mind of our Lord's disciples from the beginning, first of all

especially in the form suggested by the great prophecy of the suffering redeemer in Isaiah liii. Thus Christ was unhesitatingly regarded as having offered sacrifice for the redemption of His people. And His sacrifice was self-sacrifice. What He offered was Himself. Thus if He was victim and propitiation, He was also priest and high priest. The idea may be said to be close at hand throughout the New Testament, but it is made explicit and developed only in the Epistle to the Hebrews. There only Christ is called a priest. But there the whole doctrine of the Incarnate Son receives this special direction. As incarnate, 'partaking of our flesh and blood,' He could be a merciful and sympathetic high priest of humanity, able to represent us before God, as one touched with the feeling of our infirmities, while wholly exempt from our sin. So He can make on our behalf the acceptable sacrifice—that is, the moral sacrifice, the sacrifice of perfect obedience; the only really acceptable sacrifice which can be offered in man's name. But this obedience is the obedience of man. It is in the body therefore, and it is obedience unto death. Thus the sacrifice of obedience was sealed in blood upon the

cross: and in the power of the resurrection life, triumphant through death, it was presented in the heavenly places, the true Holy of Holies, by Christ as our great high priest, and made for evermore the ground of man's acceptance. Thus the power of Christ's intercession, as high priest or mediator of the new covenant, and the cleansing power of His blood—the blood of sprinkling or perpetual application—envelop and consecrate henceforth the whole sphere of the Christian life. In this sense Christ is the priest—the great high priest of our humanity, and 'the blood of the eternal covenant' which He has inaugurated is, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, made the attribute which qualifies Christ as *Pastor*, 'the great shepherd of the sheep'.[1] He could not have been the effective shepherd without redeeming us as priest by His sacrifice from the guilt and pain of sin.

But is there any sign, we may reverently ask, that our Lord Himself in the days of His flesh thought of His function as priestly? The Epistle to the Hebrews, we must remark,

[1] Hebr. 13^{20}.

grounds His priesthood on what He was and did in the days of His flesh, but represents Him as entering upon the exercise of His priesthood only at His entry into the heavenly places in the power of His resurrection life. Still, His priesthood has its ground in His person and in His mortal life: and we have to ask ourselves whether our Lord thought of Himself as priest. Undoubtedly He both thought of Himself, and strove to train His disciples to think of Him, under the form of the suffering servant of Isaiah. And the suffering servant is represented as the conscious and deliberate offerer of Himself as a sacrifice for His people. This thought must have been present to our Lord's mind. He was not only to enlighten His people by what He taught, but to reconcile them to God by His sacrifice. In this sense He was to give His life as ransom for many. But the idea comes plainly into view only at the Last Supper. There, at the institution of the Eucharist, it is attached not to the conception of the suffering servant, but to that of the inaugural sacrifice of the Old Covenant. Moses, after the giving of the Law, is recorded as fulfilling what would later have been a function

exclusively and specially priestly.[1] He is described as first of all eliciting from the people the promise of obedience: then building an altar with twelve pillars representative of the whole people: then taking the blood of sacrificed animals and sprinkling half of it on the altar; and when he had read the book of the covenant and secured anew the promise of obedience, we read that 'he took the half of the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words'. Then, as a sequel to this initiatory sacrifice, the representative of Israel 'went up' and saw the God of Israel unharmed, and partook afterwards of the sacrificial meal—'They did eat and drink.'

Our Lord is described as acting at the Last Supper in the fullest consciousness of this ancient scene, and deliberately reproducing and adapting the words of Moses in His own words, 'This is my blood of the covenant which is

[1] Moses is to be regarded, as is suggested in Heb. 3^2 (see Westcott), as comprising in his one office what was afterwards separated into the offices of prophet, priest, and king, and is so compared to Christ.

being shed for many [unto remission of sins]'. This must have been intended to impress upon the minds of His disciples, at least in retrospect, when they could take it in, that He was consciously offering His life, shedding His blood, as a sacrifice which should be the basis of a new covenant of acceptance for them with God. And when He took the materials of bread and wine which were with Him on the supper table and blessed them, and gave them to His disciples to eat and drink, and declared them to be His sacrificed body and His outpoured blood, He was instituting, as the Christian church believed, a symbolical rite which would have no meaning except in the light of His sacrifice and His priesthood.

In this sense, then, it must be said that Christ, while yet on earth, knew Himself and proclaimed Himself the priest and sacrifice for man. And, it must be added, by the total dissimilarity of His priesthood and priestly action to anything ordinarily called by that name, He must be regarded as having purged and transformed for ever the idea of priesthood, as profoundly as He was to purge the idea of kingship.

In fact, nothing can be more significant, in all the long-drawn-out controversy over sacerdotalism in the church, than how little this central consideration has been in evidence: that, in whatever sense there is priesthood in Christianity, it must be priesthood as reformed and represented by Christ. But to this we shall have occasion to return.

(*c*) That Jesus was king, is only to say in other words that He was Christ. He knew Himself and finally declared Himself to be the Christ. But He transformed the conception of kingship in taking it, as fundamentally as He transformed the conception of priesthood. He set aside all the political and military associations of kingship, and would have nothing to do with them. He would be no king in any such sense as would have ranged Him with, or arrayed Him against, the kings of the earth, or would have armed Him with weapons of force to subdue men to His rule. His kingdom was not of this world. Again, He repudiated all the motives which lead men of the world to seek and exercise power—all arrogance and self-assertion, all love of power or splendour. He was meek and lowly of heart. His rule was to spring out of

humility and love, sacrifice and service. But out of this soil there did spring a kingship which he could claim and exercise—a kingship over the hearts and lives of men who yielded to Him their devotion and loyalty, a kingship based simply upon the divine will: appearing now in lowly guise, but one day to show itself all powerful to exalt the humble and destroy the proud.

He saw men's need for support and control and guidance: their need of a leader and a master: their readiness to yield their willing obedience and trust to one whom they felt to 'have authority': their capacity to grow in strength and self-control and freedom under the discipline of trial and obedience. He became the master and leader of those who would make the sacrifice involved in following Him. These He trained into conformity with His spirit.

A very thoughtful writer[1] has forced us to see with what reserve our Lord exercised His power: how careful He was of the individuality of men: how He gives men 'seed thoughts'

[1] Dr. Latham in *Pastor Pastorum* (Cambridge, 1890). Coming back to this book after a lapse of nearly twenty years, it still seems to me—especially its opening chapters—quite admirable and true.

which will fructify in their minds, not dogmas which will quench or crush them: how He encourages them to think for themselves: how He elicits questions and is sparing in answers. But alike by what He was and did and said, He trained His disciples to rely on Him: to trust His power to help and to save in all necessities of spirit or body. Thus they came insensibly to believe on Him with the sort of faith which forced them to see in Him one who was indeed their brother man, but also something much more. Meanwhile, in His majestic meekness He compelled His adversaries to fear Him, even while they plotted against Him, as some one mysteriously and unaccountably great.

In the nature of things the kingship of one who must be acknowledged to be Son of God belongs to Himself alone. But He made it plain that a share in His rule was to belong to those whom He was training to be the instruments of His kingdom. 'Even,' He said, 'as my Father appointed unto me a kingdom, I appoint unto you that ye may sit and drink at my table in my kingdom: and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'[1]

[1] Luke 22^{29-30}.

Jesus Christ, then, the true shepherd, was prophet to men, priest for men, and king over men. And in some sense, which we shall have occasion to examine more closely, all the three elements of Christ's pastoral office—His function as prophet to teach men, and as priest to reconcile them to God, and as king to discipline and train and rule them—were to be carried out among men by His disciples. His sheep and His lambs were to be fed and shepherded by those who were only of like nature with themselves, but it was to be done in Christ's name and by His Spirit perpetuating His own work. That is a root idea of the New Testament, and is, we may say, agreed upon by all Christians. The question is now by what means and under what conditions this was to be done.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH THE HOME OF SALVATION

Our Lord came to be the good shepherd, the saviour of our disordered and enfeebled manhood: and the work of carrying out this salvation which He came to bring, the shepherding of men, He entrusted to men. He committed it in a special sense to certain special individuals—the Twelve. The significance of this fact will appear more distinctly as we go on. But these apostles, whatever else they may appear to have been, were the leaders in a company larger than themselves. When Jesus Christ left this world, they are seen as the central figures in a community or society which, as being the people of the Christ, succeeds to the prerogative of Israel as the people of God, and is called, like Israel of old, the church. It is the institution and function of this church, apart from any question of its officers or organization, which has now to be examined.

Jesus Christ, it is maintained, prepared and

instituted a visible society of men, His church, and committed to this society the function of representing Him and carrying out His work in this world. Other founders of beneficent organizations have secured the permanence of their ideas and intentions by writing constitutions or rules. Jesus Christ wrote nothing. He gave permanence to His intentions by instructing, constituting, and inspiring a society of persons: and the benefits of His 'salvation' were to consist in membership in this society. Men were to be 'shepherded' by being gathered into this flock or society of persons, and kept in its fellowship and discipline. The society as a whole was accordingly given a controlling power over the individuals who composed it: a general power of control or quasi-legislative power, which is expressed in Jewish terms as an authority to 'bind' (i.e. prohibit) and to 'loose' (i.e. allow) with divine sanction: and a judicial power over individuals, such as follows naturally from the former authority, to admit them into the divine communion or to expel them from it, which is expressed as 'forgiving' or 'retaining' sins, with the same divine sanction.[1] And the

[1] Matt. 16^{18-19}, 18^{18-20}; John 20^{21-23}.

obligation of fellowship in the society was presented in a concrete shape by the institution of sacraments, that is, visible and symbolical actions, which were both appointed channels of divine grace, and at the same time social ceremonies—especially ceremonies which admitted into the full membership of the society, baptism and the laying on of hands,[1] and a ceremony by which membership was maintained and expressed—the breaking of the bread.

I

It was, we may say, no constant feature of the original Protestant position to deny this doctrine of the visible church. It has found among later Protestants some of its most strenuous maintainers.[2] But it cannot be denied that

[1] I think the reference in Hebrews (6^2) fixes the impression conveyed in the Acts ($8^{14\,ff.}$, 19^{5-6}) that baptism was normally completed by the laying on of hands.

[2] Thus Dr. Lindsay, whose work *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1903) I shall have occasion to refer to again, maintains the doctrine of the visible church (pp. 16 ff.), and its theocratic authority (p. 24), and its essentially sacerdotal character (pp. 33 f.). No book could express, with more fire and power, the idea of the visibility, authority, and independence of the Church than that inspiring book which records the origin of the Free Church of

another idea has become characteristic of Protestantism, and especially of modern popular Protestantism, and it is necessary to state and examine it.

This idea is that 'salvation' lies in a certain relation of the individual soul to God in Christ. It is obtained by faith in Christ. Faith is an act of the individual soul, and the believer receives the forgiveness of his sins and regeneration and the benefits of the new life simply because he individually believes in Christ. Those who thus believe and are saved find themselves bound in obedience to Christ to combine—for the ministry of the word and sacraments and for mutual assistance; but this combination into a visible fellowship in this world is a thing rather of secondary than of primary importance. The conditions under which believers in Christ combine among themselves can be arranged and re-arranged from time to time

Scotland, Robert Buchanan's *Twenty Years' Conflict* (Blackie, 1852). These writers write, of course, with the long history of organized Protestant churches behind them. The original reformers were in a very difficult position. They sought to combine the maintenance of the principle of the church with the repudiation of the existing church, and their doctrine (e.g. in Calvin's *Institutes*) becomes most ambiguous.

as they find most profitable to their spiritual life. There is no one obligatory organization or mode of combination. The one essential thing is the allegiance of the individual soul to Christ. By this fundamental faith the soul is already united to the only church which really matters—the invisible church of the elect—the blessed company of all faithful people. All else is a subsequent matter of voluntary organization.

This is the doctrine of popular Protestantism. Protestants have made it their chief point to believe in the Bible, and in particular in the New Testament. And this doctrine is, I venture to say, in glaring discrepancy with the New Testament as it stands. Doubtless it has been arrived at to account for the fact that at certain periods men who were profoundly conscious of sharing the new life in Christ have found themselves excommunicated by the established or organized church to which they belonged; or have felt compelled by its corruptions, as they seemed to them, to separate themselves from it, and to organize themselves apart. Then they have explained and justified their separation by this doctrine—this distinction

between salvation and membership, or between the invisible and the visible church. But if we read the New Testament with a fresh mind, we shall find no such distinction there.

Thus: in the epistles of S. Paul there is certainly no distinction between membership of Christ and membership of the church; which, again, is a quite visible and definable body, whether it is the local church which is being considered, or the church in general, of which each local church is representative.[1] 'Baptism into Christ' is also baptism into the 'one body'[2] and communion in the body and blood of Christ

[1] As is well known, the word 'church' in the New Testament is used for the local society, as in the phrase, 'the church of the Thessalonians', 'the churches of Galatia,' 'the seven churches which are in Asia.' And even for a smaller group—the congregation which met in some leading Christian's house—Rom. 16^{5}, 1 Cor. 16^{19}, Col. 4^{15}, Philem.[2] It is also used by S. Paul for the church at large, and this use becomes dominant in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. This is the use of the word in S. Matt. 16^{18}, and it is found side by side with the other use in the Acts. It is in accordance with this use that we read of 'the church which is in Jerusalem', 'the church which is in Antioch' (Acts 11^{22}, 13^{1}), i. e. the church as represented in those places. But a unity of ideas runs through all the uses of the word. The church means the people of God, the society which has Christ for its head and is indwelt by His Spirit and equipped by the Spirit's gifts, whether it be the church at large or its local representation.

[2] Rom. 6^{3}, 1 Cor. 12^{13}.

is communion also in the body, the church.[1] Thus the individual Christian's body is called 'a temple of the Holy Ghost': but first the whole society is declared to be 'the temple of God' in which the Holy Ghost dwells.[2] S. Paul is the apostle of individual faith. But he is as certainly and plainly the apostle of membership and corporate life.

His epistles are full throughout of the obligations of membership. The acceptance of corporate discipline in each local society is plainly made to be a normal and necessary element of Christian life. It is a searching and trying discipline, for Jew and Gentile, bond and free, to live together in one community. But it is necessary, though it is difficult. The ethical requirement of Christianity is a social requirement. The catholicism of the church means the obligation of people of all sorts to 'receive one another, as Christ also received them' into practical fellowship. This discipline of individuals is a matter for the local societies or churches of Christ. But each local church—made up of more or less worthy members—is the

[1] 1 Cor. 10^{16-17}. [2] 1 Cor. 6^{19}, 3^{16-17}.

embodiment of the one church of Christ or of God which exists in no other way on earth than as embodied in particular churches. And the authority of the apostle, whether in doctrine or morals, embodies the principle that the particular churches are not independent units. The apostolic authority represents a central control.[1] This authority, as S. Paul represents it, is as far as possible from being overbearing or despotic: it is an authority of Christ and in Christ. But it is an authority; and is felt as such in every one of S. Paul's Epistles.[2] On the whole he is

[1] 1 Cor. 7^{17} 'So ordain I in all the churches'; 11^{16} 'If any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God'; 14^{33} 'As in all the churches of the saints'; 14^{36} 'What? was it from you the word of God went forth? or came it unto you alone?' This sense of a common rule of faith and practice over all churches is even stronger in the later epistles.

[2] Most of S. Paul's Epistles are written to churches of his own foundation. The only exception is the Epistle to the Romans. To the Christian community there he has to introduce himself and commend himself. And the epistle has little reference to local topics. It is therefore less authoritative and disciplinary than S. Paul's Epistles generally. But it exhibits quite plainly the idea of a common doctrine, 'my doctrine and the preaching of Jesus Christ,' which demands from all men of all nations 'the obedience of faith' (1^{1-7}, 16^{25-27}). This 'obedience' which the Romans had shown to the true doctrine (6^{17}) is to safeguard them against those who would cause divisions 'con-

as conspicuously the apostle of church membership as he is the apostle of personal faith. There is of course no more antagonism between the principle of social obligation and the principle of personal initiative and correspondence, in religious development than in any other department of human progress.

And the opening history of our religion, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, proclaims the same idea of the visible church as the only sphere of Christ's salvation in a way quite unmistakable. The appeal to men, first at Jerusalem and then in a widening circle, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, is to believe: and the believer is to be baptized; and to be baptized is to become a member of the community 'the brethren'; and membership is described as 'the continuing steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship and the breaking of the bread and the prayers'. 'Those that were being saved' were added daily to *them*, i. e. to the existing community.[1] There is not

trary to the doctrine which they learned' (16^{17-19}). And S. Paul's apostolic commission, to prepare the whole Gentile world for God, authorizes him to give them boldly any necessary reminder (15^{15}).

[1] Acts 2^{41-7}.

the slightest sanction for the idea of a saving faith which stops short of membership.

There is indeed the record of an individual believer being baptized and passing out into the heathen world as a solitary figure—it is the record of the eunuch of the Ethiopian queen. But as this man was already attached to the ancient Jewish church and had come up to Jerusalem to worship, so we should suppose, as he made his way back to Ethiopia, he would have felt himself to be a member of the same church of God, only now of the church which had come to believe in the crucified and risen Christ proclaimed by its ancient prophets. He would have known himself to be a member of that visible body, the church of Christ, though his duties of membership were suspended by his necessary isolation.

When the gospel is carried by evangelists or members of the Jerusalem church to other places, local churches arise throughout Judaea and Samaria, and later at Antioch. The church in Samaria is at once attached to the mother-church of Jerusalem by the mission of Peter and John to complete the gift of baptism by the gift of the Holy Ghost given through the laying on of

their hands.[1] And in the case of the church at Antioch, where the gospel was preached to Greeks as well as Jews with excellent results, Barnabas was at once sent from Jerusalem;[2] and shortly afterwards, when the question of the necessity of circumcision and Jewish observances for Christians became critical, and the church at Jerusalem was consulted and a decision arrived at, the decree of the Jerusalem council expresses, as decisively as words could express it, the idea of a common authority over all churches: 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.' Here is the 'binding' and 'loosing' power with divine sanction exhibited in action. Thus through this action of the council at Jerusalem, there appears, just as plainly as in the regulation by S. Paul of the churches of his foundation, the idea of a common authority over all the churches. There is no reason to think that a church which had persisted in demanding circumcision of its members would have been regarded by S. Paul (or indeed by any other of the apostles) as anything else than 'heretical' or separatist. We should

[1] Acts 8^{14-17}. [2] Acts 11^{19-26}.

judge from the Epistle to the Galatians that he must have said of such a Christian society 'Ye have fallen from grace', 'Christ shall profit you nothing.' Or again, if a church had made women teachers or bishops, I cannot think that S. Paul would have consented to recognize it or receive it into fellowship. There were common principles of faith and practice—the beginnings of a common law—already over all the churches.

Thus the certain impression derived from the apostolic letters and the Acts is the impression that the salvation offered by Christ to man involves, and indeed consists in, membership in a society. And this impression is undoubtedly confirmed by the record of Christ's words as they are given us in the Gospels taken as they stand.

All three synoptic gospels describe our Lord as speaking in the character of an owner of a house who has gone abroad, leaving behind him a large household with persons in charge of various works, and a steward who is to give to each member of the household his portion of meat in due season.[1] This is a figurative descrip-

[1] S. Matt. 24^{45}; S. Mark 13^{34}; S. Luke 12^{42}.

tion of the church as our Lord was to leave it behind Him—the description of a visibly organized society. S. Matthew's Gospel ascribes to our Lord with much greater distinctness the intention to found His church—His new Israel: a body representing Him and exercising authority over its members in His name.[1] The fourth Gospel ascribes to our Lord in His last discourses language about the coming of the Holy Spirit and about the unity of His disciples in Himself, which affords a sufficient basis for the whole of S. Paul's teaching about the administration of the Holy Spirit in the church, the body of Christ:[2] and also represents Him after His resurrection as breathing His spirit into His disciples, and commissioning them to carry on His work in the world, and empowering them to forgive and retain sins with His sanction.[3] These last words imply a visible society with a definable membership.

Whether we ought to discriminate between earlier and later elements in the Gospels will be considered directly. But taking first the Epistles

[1] S. Matt. 16^{18-19}, 18^{17-18}, 28^{19-20}.
[2] S. John 15, 17. [3] S. John 20^{22-3}.

and Acts as they stand, and then the Gospels as they stand, there is no room for doubt at all that our Lord established a visible society to be the home for His salvation: that is to say, that He reformed, but did not alter, the conception fundamental to the Old Testament that the covenant of God is with a people.

'*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*: outside the church there is no salvation' is an unpalatable maxim. It is, I cannot but believe, an untrue maxim if it is interpreted to mean that no one attains the end of man's being, or shares the ultimate or heavenly salvation—the membership in the kingdom of God which is to come—who is not a member of the church on earth.

The church by its unfaithfulness and corruptions has alienated many who are the friends of Christ; and by its limitations and its lack of zeal has failed to reach and win multitudes who have been or are ready to welcome Christ. All this inadequacy in the representation of Christ by the church we believe will be rectified. 'Many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,' while 'the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the

outer darkness'. The principle thus enunciated by Christ has its application to the New Covenant as to the old. But none the less, Christ did come to establish a new covenant of salvation: a sphere of human life where God's salvation is known and accepted and realized here and now in the world: and this sphere of covenant is the visible society or church, into which men are admitted by the one baptism, and in which they profess in common the one name, and break the one bread, and submit to one rule of living, and know themselves to be members one of another.

II

This doctrine about the church, giving to church membership this primary importance in the religion of Christ, is undoubtedly to be found in the New Testament as it stands. But it is maintained by some modern critics that it was a development arising under the influence of S. Paul, and also under such more conservative Jewish influences as brought the original gospel into the form in which it is presented to us in our present S. Matthew; but that it

does not represent the original teaching of Jesus Christ. That is represented more faithfully in the Gospel of Mark. There Jesus is represented as following in His teaching upon the lines of John the Baptist and proclaiming that 'the kingdom of God'—the Messianic kingdom—'is at hand'. He Himself it appears is the Messiah who is to inaugurate this kingdom. As the Messiah, He must suffer and rise again from the dead, before He comes in His kingdom. But the kingdom is to come within the lifetime of some of those who listened to Him. For this they who believe in Him are to watch and wait. The coming of the kingdom is to be the substance of their message. For the brief interval, while they are waiting for it, there is no suggestion that any church organization was necessary or was in fact made. There is nothing corresponding to the passages in S. Matthew about the church, as the kingdom of heaven here and now in the world, with 'binding' and 'loosing' powers, and an authoritative commission to represent Christ and propagate His name over the world. Also there is nothing about the Pentecostal return of Christ by His Spirit to indwell His church,

as in S. John. The whole attention of the disciples, we should gather, is to be concentrated upon the expected return of Christ. The idea of the church, as the organized kingdom of God or of Christ on earth, or as Christ's body by the indwelling of His Spirit, are later ideas, due either to the genius of S. Paul, or to the survival of Jewish tradition, or to the practical exigencies of organization, which became more apparent as Christ's coming in glory was in fact delayed.

This representation of the original gospel[1] must, I feel sure, be decisively rejected on the whole, and for two chief reasons.

1. It takes S. Mark's Gospel quite out of its actual historical setting. S. Mark wrote his Gospel out of the hearts of the Christianity which is described in the Acts and which had established itself under the teaching of S. Paul. S. Mark's record, with its concentrated emphasis upon the kingdom to come, must be admitted to give a truthful representation of the original impression made by Christ on the minds of His

[1] The reference is to Loisy and Schweitzer, see above, p. 21. That there is even in S. Mark some anticipation of the church on earth after Christ had gone, see p. 6.

disciples, at least so far as an important element in His teaching is concerned. S. Paul's Epistles, and in a less degree the Acts, no less than S. Mark's Gospel, bear witness to the eager expectation among the first Christians of the immediate coming. S. Paul himself undoubtedly shared this expectation, though it gradually weakened. Undoubtedly this eager expectation must have coloured the whole of the earliest preaching of the gospel. As late as the end of the first century, the account given by Clement of Rome of the original apostolic preaching is that 'they went forth, in country and town, preaching the gospel that the kingdom of God was about to come'.[1]

S. Mark, then, gives true 'memoirs' of Christ's teaching. But are they complete? Can S. Mark be supposed to have conceived them to be complete? We cannot suppose so. The eager expectation of the end, the gospel that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear, taken by itself would have reduced to insignificance, as it showed signs of doing at Thessalonica, the whole present life, and would have indisposed the Christian for any efforts of

[1] Clem. 42.

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organization. But, as a matter of fact, side by side with the eager expectation of the kingdom from heaven, and the dissolution of the present world-order, there had gone on from the very beginning a consistent work of organizing churches as if in preparation for an indefinite future. These two elements of the earliest Christian life are hard to reconcile. But, in fact, they co-existed with one another, with no sense of contradiction. The organizing of churches, moreover, was proceeded with under an undoubted conviction that this was the intention of Christ. The churches, and the doctrine and organization of the church, developed in all ways. All the epistles bear witness to it. John Mark, whom we have the best reason to believe the author of our second Gospel, was an associate of S. Paul's earliest and latest activity in founding and organizing churches, and he was a companion and associate also of S. Peter. When he wrote his Gospel, let us say, as is most probable, from Rome about A.D. 65, he cannot have been either ignorant or forgetful of the ideas of S. Paul, or the activity which they represented. But by S. Paul the gospel as S. Mark represents it was

set in the very context of the idea which it is now proposed to set in opposition to it. There can have been in his mind no sense of such opposition. S. Mark must have known that the memories which he gave the church did not represent the whole gospel or the whole mind of Christ. He truthfully recorded what he had received or ascertained of Christ's teaching. Why the particular reminiscences are as partial as they are we cannot tell. But they do not account for the whole picture of the Christianity with which S. Mark was familiar. This can only be accounted for if Christ did really found and instruct a church for the world, as we are told He did in the first Gospel. Christianity, as S. Mark knew it, requires his Gospel to account for it, but also more. It requires also what is contained in the first Gospel.

2. The other reason which is decisive for rejecting the purely apocalyptic or eschatological representation of our Lord's teaching lies in the Acts of the Apostles. It seems to me that only by arbitrary violence done to the evidence can any one to-day doubt that S. Luke, the physician and companion of S. Paul, wrote both the third Gospel and the whole of the Acts, as two parts

of the same work: and that he was at pains to inform himself, and was in fact well informed, about the earliest beginnings of the gospel before he was himself associated with it.[1] But if so, the organization of the church was certainly no later or gradual development. Christianity existed from the very first as a visible society. S. Paul's ideas about the church are the natural interpretation of the fact of the church as it had existed from the time when the risen Christ ceased to appear visibly to His disciples and passed into the unseen. Christianity then, beyond all question, must have come from Christ's own hand as a church. And further, the expectation of the Spirit to come, and then the knowledge that He did come at Pentecost, are represented in the Acts as the dominant ideas of the Christians, as soon as ever they lost Christ's visible presence. And this can only be reasonably accounted for if Christ had in fact given preparatory teaching about the coming of the Holy Spirit, precisely of the kind which He is represented as giving in S. John's Gospel. The actual phrase attributed to S. Peter—'Having been by the right

[1] On this subject something more will be said later.

hand of God lifted up, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he poured forth this which ye both see and hear'—implies that the presence of the spirit was the fulfilment of a divine promise which could not be accomplished until Christ was glorified: which is precisely the substance of the teaching given in S. John.[1]

The outpouring by the ascended Christ of His Spirit to dwell with His church is, in the Acts, closely associated with the immediate expectation of His second coming;[2] but the church in the Acts proceeds, precisely as is implied in S. Paul's Epistles, to organize itself as for a wide and long life, even though all the time it was expecting speedy absorption into the kingdom from heaven. The witness of the Acts, then, is the strongest evidence that Jesus Christ, besides proclaiming the kingdom to come from heaven, also organized the church to represent the kingdom on earth, and promised to equip and inspire it with His Spirit.

To resume: we cannot pretend to be fully

[1] Acts 2^{33}: cf. John 14^{26} and see Swete *Holy Spirit in the N. T.* (Macmillan, 1909), p. 77.

[2] Acts 2^{17-20}, 3^{19-21}.

informed as to the place actually occupied in our Lord's own teaching by the anticipation of His coming in glory, or as to the precise terms in which He spoke of it;[1] but we may with decision reject the idea that the teaching about the church which underlies all S. Paul's action and doctrine, and which is implied throughout the Acts as matter of course, and which is directly ascribed to Christ in the first Gospel, was not in fact really part of His teaching: and we are bound by the evidence of the Acts to suppose that the teaching about the administration of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, which is so fully given by S. Paul, and assumed as no matter of controversy, was really based and grounded, as the fourth Gospel tells us it was, upon teaching given by Christ on earth to His disciples.

III

We revert therefore to the position with which we started—that Jesus, the Christ, de-

[1] There is some reason to think that S. John, as in other respects, so in his teaching about the return of Christ by the Spirit in relation to the end of the world, was consciously correcting a one-sided impression, as it seemed to him, of the meaning of his Master.

liberately entrusted His work of redemption to a society or body of persons which He chose, instructed and, in a measure, organized during His life on earth. During this period the small body of His disciples was with Him in constant companionship. As we let our imagination picture such association with our Lord, we are disposed to feel that no condition of spiritual privilege can be conceived so high as that. But our Lord, in discourses which are reported by S. John, and which, as we have seen, must in substance have been really delivered by Him, impressed it upon His disciples that they were to look forward to a higher and better relation to Himself: that He was to go out of their sight and pass back into the sphere of being from which He had come: but that when He was thus glorified, He would send down upon them Another to be their supporter in what would otherwise have been their loneliness, even the Spirit—His own Spirit and His Father's; and that this Other should be not merely a substitute for Himself, but should be His own presence and the Father's presence with them and in them: that thus it would be expedient for them that He should go away,

because only when He was gone could the Spirit come, and to have His Spirit within them would ensure to them a far closer and more real union with Himself than the outward fellowship which they had enjoyed with Him as of man with man.

Thus was the church prepared for that career upon which we see it embarking in the Acts: and for that belief in itself as Christ's 'body' which we see possessing it through S. Paul's teaching. The church, that is to say, went out into the world believing itself—the visible fellowship of those who had believed and been baptized into Christ—to be the organ and instrument of Christ; through which, and through which alone, He was determined to carry out His purpose of redemption in the world.

The church, therefore, would be in the world what Christ was, though in dependence upon Him: that is to say, as Christ was prophet, priest, and king, so would the church be prophetic, priestly, kingly. And these are, in fact, familiar attributes of the church in the New Testament.

(*a*) The church is *prophetic*: that is to say, it is to speak for God by definite commission and

inspiration: it is to be the divine teacher of its own members and of the nations. No one can doubt the prominence of teaching in the New Testament. There are no books which insist more than the books of the New Testament on the influence of ideas—ideas about God and human nature—in the divine purpose for man: on the importance to the society of men of right ideas, and on the consequent importance of rejecting decisively false and misleading doctrine. 'Though an apostle,' cries S. Paul, 'or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any other gospel than that which you at first received, let him be anathema.'[1] 'Beloved, believe not every spirit,' writes S. John, 'but prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ is not of God.' 'Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto

[1] Gal. 1^{8-9}.

you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him the greeting partaketh in his evil work.'[1]

Certainly the Christian church is regarded as essentially prophetic, not in the sense of being the channel of new 'words of God', but in the sense of being entrusted with a word of God already communicated, a truth which is sufficient to make men free. It is a pillar and ground of the truth.[2]

And it is the whole body which is entrusted with this truth. There were specially inspired individuals in the earliest church called prophets: and in certain churches a somewhat general diffusion of special gifts of spiritual inspiration, whether prophecy or tongues or interpretation of tongues, which tended speedily to disappear; and as these special gifts of inspiration were withdrawn or suspended, the special teaching authority of the normal ministry of the church comes into greater prominence; but none of these special offices or functions must be allowed to obscure the general characteristic of the Christian society, that there was

[1] 1 S. John 4^{1-3}; 2 S. John $^{9-11}$. [2] 1 Tim. 3^{15}.

in it no restriction of the knowledge of the truth or the responsibility for the truth to any inner circle of initiated persons or to any official class. From the first it was recognized as characteristic of the Christian society that 'from the least to the greatest' all should know God and His truth.[1] The Christian church was not to be divided into the priests who were to know and to teach, and the people who were simply to receive what they taught. The idea is rather that 'the disciple' can become 'as his master'[2]—that the teacher's object in 'teaching every man in all wisdom', is that he may 'present every man perfect (i. e. perfectly initiated) in Christ'[3]—that every one is admitted to become a 'spiritual man who judgeth all things and is judged of none':[4] that every member of the body 'has an anointing from the Holy One and knows all things'—needing not that any should teach him, because his anointing teacheth him concerning all things.[5] On the very day of Pentecost the note is struck that the inspiration of the church, by contrast to an earlier state of things, extends to all: that it

[1] Heb.[11] 8. [2] Matt. 10[25]. [3] Col. 1[28].
[4] 1 Cor. 2[15]. [5] 1 John 2[20, 27].

was upon all flesh—sons and daughters, young men and old men, servants and handmaids.[1]

Thus the exhortations in the apostolic epistles —apart from the pastoral epistles—to maintain the faith, and the encouragements to understand it, are addressed to the whole body of the faithful.

(*b*) In the same way it is the whole body of the church which is *priestly*. The high priesthood of Christ on behalf of redeemed humanity, as already explained, lies in His having won by His perfect sacrifice of Himself the fullest reconciliation with God for all men in possibility and for those who belong to Him in fact. The church is the priestly body, because it both lives in the full enjoyment of His reconciliation and is the instrument through which the whole world is to be reconciled to God 'in one body'.[2] It will appear that there are in the church men who are in a special sense entrusted with 'the ministry of reconciliation' just as there are in a special sense prophets and teachers. But this special office must not be allowed to interfere with the truth that the whole body is priestly—'a royal priesthood,'

[1] Acts 2^{17-18}. [2] Eph. 2^{16}.

'priests to Christ's God and Father,' 'priests of God and of Christ.'[1] There is not found in the New Testament any basis for the idea of a priestly class in the church occupying any nearer position to God than the rest of their brethren, or brought into any more intimate relations to Him. The true principle, that the highest privileges of union and co-operation with God, in Christ, by His Spirit, are freely extended to every member of the church, has in fact received the fullest recognition in all the best Christian theology. And as this freedom of approach to God and perfection of union in Christ is specially realized in the eucharist, so in the eucharistic liturgies the sacrifice is constantly spoken of as the sacrifice of the whole church—'we offer,' 'we present'—and not of the ministering priest on their behalf. And the gift of communion is the same for all. Copious extracts from the literature of the church could easily be given in this sense. Moreover, not only does each member of the Christian society enjoy on his own behalf and on that of his brethren in Christ the freedom of approach towards God which Christ has

[1] 1 Pet. 2^9; Rev. 1^6, 5^{10}, 20^6.

won for him; but also he stands, and the whole Christian society stands, before the world as exercising on behalf of all humanity its priestly function. It stands 'lifting up holy hands' on behalf of all men.[1] It thus offers itself to all men as the example and the instrument of reconciliation with God.

(*c*) And the Church is *kingly*; it is a royal priesthood, like the people of the old covenant, but in a far deeper sense, because it partakes of the regal character of Christ.

The Christian church went out into the world as an ordered society in Christ, with higher and lower grades, rulers and ruled, more or less honourable members of the body: nothing was so marked about the Christians as that they were under obedience, and the servants of an unseen King, bound to the observance of the laws of their calling, according to each man's station. But the dignity of their King belonged to all of them: for they shared His Spirit and were, all of them, of His family—He was their brother. Thus they stood before the world as representatives of one who was King of kings and Lord of lords; and they made all men

[1] 1 Tim. $2^{1,8}$.

understand that they claimed all the world and all its forces and powers for their King. And here again the dignity of fellowship with the royal Christ and the direct concern in the administration of His kingdom, belonged to no class in the church, but to every one of the anointed race.[1]

The church was thus prophetic, priestly, kingly. And whatever positions we may find to belong properly to the officers of the church, it is of the greatest importance to bring into prominence, what subsequent history sometimes tended to obscure, the freedom in the truth and the equality in grace and dignity which belonged to the whole Christian body and to every member of it. But it is at least as important to observe that, whatever privileges attach themselves to the Christian attach themselves to him as a member of a body, admitted to his membership by a definite rite of baptism, anointed to his office by the laying on of hands, and bound by his membership to the acceptance of a common discipline, under the 'binding' and 'loosing'

[1] In the N. T. and later documents the share of the whole community in the exercise of discipline is noticeable: see 2 Cor. 2^6.

authority of the whole body: bound also by his membership to the loyal maintenance of a common faith.

It is quite true that there have been periods when the church was sadly untrue to the spirit of Christian liberty: when Christians have not been treated as free men: when obligations have been laid upon men's consciences which were as intolerable as the Jewish yoke which neither the first Christians nor their forefathers were able to bear: when the responsible rulers of the church have taken away the key of knowledge and neither entered in themselves nor suffered others to enter in. We cannot deny that the widespread rebellion by Christians against church authority, and even the repudiation of the very idea of the visible church and of the obligation of membership, have been largely due to a very lamentable misrepresentation of Christ by the church which exists to represent Him. Nor can it be denied that the misrepresentation of Christ by the church has a very deep and important bearing upon the responsibility of those who in different ages have seemed to themselves to find no way of being true to Christ but by being rebels against the church.

All such considerations, however, we are leaving out of sight for the present. We are considering only the original intention of Christ as it appears especially in the documents of the New Testament; and, with none of the difficulties of present-day experience at present before us, we cannot but pronounce that Jesus Christ intended to carry out His work through one visible society, to be represented by one community in every place, and intended the salvation which He offered to men here and now in the world to consist in membership in this visible body.

IV

I do not think it is to be denied that if this proposition is assented to, and if we believe that our way through our present-day difficulties is by a return to the intention of Christ, a policy is required of Christians to-day, and not least of us churchmen, widely different from that which is being commonly pursued: and that especially in two respects.

1. We shall have to alter our estimate of the place which loyal and obedient membership holds in the Christian's view of his practical

duties. We are in the habit of looking back with some contempt upon the earlier periods when it was the fashion for every sect to claim to be the one true church of Christ, and to anathematize those who differed from it: and complacently to contrast our own days when more liberal and tolerant views prevail. Now it is quite true that bodies claiming to be the Christian church have often in the past made an exclusive claim in the name of Christ that was totally illegitimate and have maintained their claim by illegitimate means. But their course of action, even when it was mistaken, was based upon a true principle which we are in danger of forgetting: viz. that in the religion of Christ membership in His church is of obligation, and that the church has a real and practical authority over the individual. In resenting the narrowness of our forefathers, we are in danger of reaction into an error at least as fundamental as any of theirs: the error of ignoring the obligation of membership in the church which Christ founded.

It may be difficult for a Christian to make up his mind where the church is to be found. But it is our duty, if we believe in Christ, to

consider the question with all seriousness. On the other hand the popular undenominational Christianity of our day, and all that tends in this direction, ignores and depreciates the obligation of membership. The tendency to diffuse Christianity by thus cheapening its cost to the individual is extraordinarily prevalent. And there is literally no tendency more flatly contrary to the method pursued by our Lord.

We of the Church of England are presented, in the Prayer Book, with a high ideal of the obligations of membership. The ideal is first presented in connexion with the baptism of the infant, when the sponsors are to acknowledge, on behalf of the church which is to train the infant, the obligation of membership into which baptism admits. Confirmation, which is made the necessary prelude to Communion, is in a very special sense the sacrament of conscious and deliberate membership. In connexion with Holy Communion, in connexion with Holy Matrimony, in connexion with the Burial of the Dead, specific obligations of membership are brought into prominence. Now at the present moment we are being pressed at all points, in accordance with the spirit of the times, to minimize the

obligation and to break down the requirement—whether it be the requirement of confirmation, or the obligation of the Christian law of marriage, or some other—and so to secure a more or less cheap and nominal communion with the church of a larger number of persons. It is our duty at all points to resist this tendency: and to insist, in the name of Christ, upon making the obligation of membership real. One of our first duties to-day is to make it plainly understood that to be a member of the church must be understood to involve not only financial obligation, though it involves that, but also all that is implied in active membership of a society which is entrusted with an exacting message to a reluctant world.

It is in proportion as the obligation of membership is accepted, that the right of the whole laity to share in the government of the church can be recognized, and can have practical expression given to it: in accordance with the great principle, emphasized by Mazzini, that 'political privileges are the correlatives of political duties done'. In fact the loss of the true position and dignity of the layman has been due in history not so much to clerical

aggression, as to the lowering of the standard of lay membership. 'The layman,' writes Clement, 'is bound by the layman's ordinances.'

It has never been the habit of the church to scrutinize the orthodoxy of its lay members. It is certainly undesirable that it should do so to-day. But there is no similar objection to emphasizing their practical obligations.[1]

2. The more definite the idea of membership is made in our modern world of England, the more absurd will any identification of church and state appear: the more inevitable must become the demand for liberty to the church to manage its own spiritual affairs, to exercise the kind of control over its members which from the beginning has belonged to the church.

When a modern churchman repudiates the authority of the state in matters of Christian teaching or Christian discipline, e. g. as to the religious education of children or the Christian law of marriage, he is often told that he is

[1] The basis of suffrage for laymen in each parish—formulated by the Representative Church Council for elections to the Rural-decanal and Diocesan Conferences, and so indirectly to the central Council—gives us an opportunity for defining our membership, as far as men are concerned, of which we ought to avail ourselves.

pursuing a policy of secularizing the national life. It cannot be said too often that, according to the New Testament, the secular authority and the secular life are divine. 'The powers that be are ordained of God.' The magistrates are God's ministers. But the secular or civil authority has its own sphere, and it is quite distinct from the sphere of Christian authority. To allow the state to dictate the conditions of Christian discipline or doctrine or worship is to confuse essentially distinct functions—functions, moreover, which in modern days are easily and indeed inevitably distinguishable. There are those hopeful enough to believe that our English Church could distinctly and peremptorily claim its essential liberties and still retain its established and endowed position. There are those who do not believe that this is possible. That question may be left for the future to settle. What is required of us by our loyalty to Christ is that we should, persistently and plainly, assert and make evident that we do claim for the church the liberty to formulate its own doctrine, to organize its own worship, to exercise its own discipline; and that we are prepared to take the consequences.

CHAPTER III

THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES

THE Christian church, as it appeared in history for 1500 years, had for its officers bishops, priests, and deacons—these at least were the most important figures and they alone the constant figures in its ministry. And through all these centuries no serious question was raised about this threefold order of the clergy or about the obligation which lay upon every Christian to accept their ministrations—that is to say, to use the sacraments administered by them, and to receive their instruction in the word of God. Amidst much that is variable in the ancient and mediaeval catholic church, amidst many local and partial developments, there are, we may say, four institutions or elements which can claim a catholicity quite unrivalled—that is, the creed or summary of the Christian faith, the canon of sacred scriptures, the sacraments, and the ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. This ministry,

it was believed, Christ Himself had instituted and authorized when He instituted the church. He had instituted it in the persons of the apostles. And it was intended to perpetuate itself; and when it became evident that the first generation of Christians was not to see the end of the world, it did perpetuate itself by way of succession—by the transmission to a succession of persons down the generations of the ministerial authority first given by Jesus Christ to the apostles: they transmitted their authority, that is to say, in so far as their commission was not an extraordinary commission as the first founders of the church, but the ordinary commission of the pastors of the flock of Christ.

I

This has been the traditional view. But it has been vehemently opposed since the Reformation. The Reformation, in one of its most important aspects, was a great rebellion, over a wide area, against the traditional officers of the church—a rebellion only too easily accounted for by the refusal or unwillingness of the authorities in the church to execute those

reforms in the teaching and system of religion which the awakened conscience and knowledge of men peremptorily demanded. Since the time of the Reformation, then, large bodies of Christians have existed in separation from the traditional ministry of the church; and have totally repudiated its title to claim the allegiance of all Christian people. In our own day the claim is often even contemptuously rejected. An official ministry of the word and sacraments, it is argued, was obviously a necessity of the Christian churches. It could not but have arisen. It did in fact arise. But it arose in the church under the pressure of expediency and by delegation from the community. All the authority belongs in the first instance to the church or community of Christians, only to the ministers of the church by its appointment. This is the theory recently elaborated afresh by Dr. Lindsay in his work already referred to.[1]

In each of the Christian churches, he says, men were needed to 'preside' (as presbyters) and to 'help' (as deacons). The community

[1] See p. 38, note 2.

selected the men amongst them who had the needed 'gifts', and gave them their status as ministers. This local official ministry of presbyters (also called bishops) and deacons is to be distinguished from the earlier prophetic and universal ministry of apostles, prophets, and teachers; who had their gift and their call from God only, and who could appeal to the 'signs' which God wrought by their hands, and to the results of their evangelistic work, as evidences of a commission which the church could only recognize. The local ministry developed on a different basis. They were the delegates of the congregation.

The church comes before the ministry, and it creates for itself and its own needs its ministering service.[1] . . . The churches at Rome and at Corinth were churches because the presence and power of Christ were manifested within the Christian fellowship in a series of 'gifts' which provided everything necessary for their corporate life as churches, organized according to any form of self-government which recommended itself to them. There is not a trace of the idea that the churches had to be organized from above in virtue of powers conferred by our Lord officially and specially upon certain of their members. On the contrary, the power from above which was truly there was *in* the community, a direct gift from the Master himself.[2]

[1] p. 136. [2] p. 121.

Each Christian community was 'a little self-governed republic', 'an independent society'.[1] In the second century 'every local church came to supplement its organization by placing *one* man at the head of the community and making him the president of the college of elders'.[2] At the same time the prophetic ministry passed away, its functions being appropriated by the permanent office-bearers of the local churches. The former part of this change was effected peaceably: the latter 'was a revolution which provoked a widespread revolt and rent the church in twain'.[3] Thus—

> Without any apostolic sanction, in virtue of the power lying within the community and given to it by the Master, the church of the second century effected a change in its ministry quite as radical, if not more so, as that made by the reformed church in the sixteenth century, when it swept away mediaeval excrescences, restored the bishops to their ancient position of pastors of congregations, and vested the power of oversight in councils of greater or lesser spheres of authority. What was within the power of the Christian people of the second century belongs to it always when providential circumstances seem to demand a change in the organization, for the ministry depends on the church and not the church on the ministry.[4]

[1] p. 156. [2] p. 169. [3] p. 169.

[4] 210; cf. 246, 'The congregation possessed within itself the power to carry out the ordination of their chief office-bearer.'

Now it is, of course, quite plain that what is done under the exigency of human need cannot at once be put in antithesis to what is of divine authority. The 'human ordinance' may be also 'ordained of God'. A Christian ministry might be the outcome of human experience, and still be rightly attributed to the divine Spirit in the church, and in this sense might be described as 'from above'.[1] More precisely than this, it might be argued that, however the Christian ministry did in fact develop into the form it took, there is no question at all that it took the form of the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, universally and as by an unquestionable and imperative instinct. There is no doubt that Christ endowed His church with the power to 'bind' and 'loose', that is, to prohibit and to allow with a divine sanction; and that this authority of the whole body is upon all its members. And there is no particular in the whole fabric of the church upon which this legislative authority has been exer-

[1] I had in *The Church and the Ministry* used the phrases 'from above' and 'from below' simply to mean 'by superior authority' and 'by delegation from the community'.

cised with more unmistakable plainness than in this matter of the ministry, confining, for instance, the power to offer and consecrate the eucharist with indisputable decision and all the world over to priests, and, within the priesthood, confining the power to ordain to holy orders to the bishops. Therefore we need not discuss the question of origins. We can accept Dr. Lindsay's theory of origins. All that must be decisively rejected in the view propounded by Dr. Lindsay is the idea of the local church as being independent of the main body. From the first there was over each local church an authority, embodied at first in the apostles and represented in the apostolic epistles and in the decision of the Jerusalem council—the authority of the church in general. This authority touched both matters of faith and matters of practice. The contents of this catholic authority came to be made more explicit in creeds and canons as time went on. But the idea of the central and general authority was plain from the first. S. Paul, as has already been said, would certainly not have regarded as a church of Christ any community which (for example) had finally decided to require circumcision as a prelude

to baptism: nor, we may say with almost equal certainty, would he have accepted any church which admitted women to be bishops and presbyters. These matters he would have regarded as matters of fundamental principle. In virtue of his authority from Christ he would have prohibited those practices. 'So ordain I in all the churches.' Thus, it may be argued, the ministry may be purely a matter of ecclesiastical development: but both it and the form of it have none the less divine authority—the authority of the whole church; such as cannot be ascribed to the papacy or to other developments of a more partial or sectional kind. And where the authority of the whole church has formally legislated, as in the matter of the ministry, the decision is supreme over all its portions.

So it might be argued, forcibly enough, and to a certain extent truly. That is to say, it is true that a belief in the mind of the church, as interpreting the mind of Christ and the purpose of His Spirit, is necessary to enable us to give a coherent and intelligible picture of the development of Christianity, and to assign to the different phenomena their relative weight and importance.

It must be admitted that if the documents of the New Testament stood alone—if Christianity had vanished from the world and these documents had been disinterred and constituted our sole evidence of the nature of an ancient religion—we should feel that various tendencies towards different kinds of organization were at work in the Christian church, that the picture presented was confused, and that no decisive conclusion as to the form of the Christian ministry could be reached. But in fact the documents of the New Testament are only some of the documents which belong to a great historical movement. And the tendency of the whole movement — the disentangling of tendencies and the emergence of dominant principles—guides us in attributing more or less importance to this or that phenomenon. The earliest history must be interpreted in the light of what emerged from it as the regular and universally accepted order. So far I think it is true that we must judge of the earliest evidence in the light of its results, or in other words, that the authority of the church determines the form of the ministry. But there is an important qualification to be made. Whatever ambiguity there

might appear to be, on a mere consideration of the New Testament documents, as to the *form* the Christian ministry was to take, no treatment of the documents as they stand can obscure their witness to its *principle.*

All Christians recognize that there are fundamental elements in the church which are not within the church's legislative power: which come out of the region anterior to, and higher than, its own historical life: which were given it or imposed upon it by the authority of Christ its Founder. Such elements are the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist, and the ordinance of monogamy, and the authority of the Old Testament scriptures: amongst these elements —I contend—is the ministry, if not in form, yet in principle and authority.

We must then carry Dr. Lindsay's theory to the test of the earliest documents of Christianity.

No doubt if you confine your attention to certain documents of the New Testament taken apart from the others, the early epistles of S. Paul, with the *Didaché* among subapostolic writings, Dr. Lindsay's contention might appear to be well based. But it is contrary, I shall contend, to the mass of the early Christian

documents, and in the New Testament especially to the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral epistles, while they, on the other hand, can be quite naturally conciliated with S. Paul's other Epistles in a complete picture.

One very important feature in the controversy is the historical value of the Acts.

In the controversy of thirty years ago Renan would have commanded the assent of critics generally in describing 'the divine institution of the hierarchy' as a 'favourite thesis' of the author of the Acts of the Apostles.[1] But, in spite of the conservatism of most English scholars, the Acts was then commonly regarded in circles called 'critical' as a second-century document of comparatively slight historical value. Now the progress of inquiry has justified the English scholars who, like Lightfoot, have contended that it is historical, and

[1] *Les Apôtres*, p. xxxix, cf. Sabatier *La Didaché*, p. 155, 'gros de toutes les prétentions hiérarchiques.' Harnack stated emphatically that 'any one, for example, who admits the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles will reach quite different conclusions from one who regards them as non-Pauline and relegates them to the second century' (*Expositor*, May 1887, p. 322), and he says, as a reason for not taking account of certain evidence, 'It seems to me very improbable that the Acts of the Apostles was written during the first century.'

that S. Luke wrote it. Dr. Harnack's recent work on the Acts[1] marks a point of recovery. I do not think it is possible reasonably to withhold assent to his conclusion that Luke, the physician and companion of S. Paul, wrote the third Gospel and the Acts as two volumes of the same work: and that with regard to the earlier portion of his narrative in the Acts, which did not fall under his own personal observation, he had access to first-hand evidence, and made good use of his opportunities. The Acts, that is to say, gives us good history based upon first-rate materials. And, if so, there is no doubt that the church started its career, not as a mere body of disciples, but as a society centring round 'the apostles whom Christ had chosen', who were witnesses of Christ and of his resurrection, but who also held an office of authority in the church, which before Pentecost is called by S. Peter a 'ministry and apostleship', and referred to, in a quotation from the Psalms, as an 'episcopate', or office

[1] Eng. trans., published by Williams and Norgate, 1909. Harnack thinks the evidence at least very strong that S. Luke wrote the Acts while S. Paul was still alive 'at the beginning of the seventh decade of the first century' (pp. 293 ff.).

of supervision.[1] The life of the first Christians is described as a 'continuing steadfast in the apostles' teaching and the fellowship'. The apostles, it appears, were the recognized centre of the fellowship, and they were even sharply discriminated from the rest of the body, as we find them occupying a definite station, standing alone with Peter for their leader in Solomon's porch; and 'of the rest' of the brethren, we read, 'durst no man join himself to them,' that is, associate himself with them as on an equality. They held a place apart.[2] When occasion arises to appoint subordinate officers, 'the seven,' they are chosen, under the direction of the apostles, by the community, and admitted to their office by the apostles with the laying on of their hands.[3] When converts were made by Philip, one of the Seven, in Samaria, the apostles send members of their college, as it appears with admitted authority, and they complete the gift of baptism, for these new converts, by procuring for them the gift of the Holy Ghost, through the same solemn action of the laying

[1] Acts $1^{20, 25}$.

[2] Acts 5^{12-18}; see Rackham *in loc.*

[3] 6^{2-6}.

on of hands.[1] Later we find S. Peter itinerating through all the rising churches, and perhaps other apostles also.[2]

It seems to me that this picture of the beginning of the church in the Acts would make it necessary to assume that, before our Lord left the earth, He had given what we can only call official authority to the Twelve. But, in fact, there is direct evidence to this effect which, if the Acts gives us good history, there is no reason for disputing. Thus in his Gospel S. Luke records a question addressed by S. Peter to our Lord, when He had been presenting the duty of being 'ready' for His coming, under the figure of the household servants of an absent master when they are expecting his return—'Speakest thou this parable unto us or also unto all?' And our Lord answers by another question, 'Who is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord will appoint over his household to give them their portion of meat in season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh,

[1] Acts 8^{14-18}, cf. 19^{6}. Also 9^{17} where the same action is ascribed to Ananias, under special divine direction: and 13^{2-3} on which see later.

[2] 9^{32}, 11^{1}.

shall find so doing.'[1] This reply suggests that Peter knew that Christ was instituting in His church an office of stewardship to 'feed His flock'. And S. Matthew records that our Lord had already promised, in unmistakable language, to appoint Peter to the steward's office in His church, which, at least in making that promise, He identifies with the kingdom of heaven. 'I will give unto thee the keys'—the symbols of the steward's office—'the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' And the steward's office is to carry with it legislative or disciplinary authority with divine sanction: 'and whatsoever thou shalt bind (or *prohibit*) on

[1] S. Luke 12^{41-8}. M. Godet's comment on this parable is as follows: 'This utterance seems to imply that the apostolate will perpetuate itself till Christ's return; and in fact it is an irresistible conclusion from the figure employed, that there will remain to the end, in the church, a ministry of the word established by Christ. The apostles perceived this so clearly that, when they left the world, they were at pains to establish a ministry of the word to take their place in the church. This ministry was a continuation of their own, if not in its completeness, at any rate in one of its most indispensable functions—that of which Jesus speaks in this parable—the distribution of spiritual nourishment to the flock. . . . The theory which makes the pastorate emanate from the church as its representative is not scriptural. This commission is rather an emanation from the apostolate, and therefore mediately an institution of Jesus Himself.'

earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose (or *allow*) on earth shall be loosed or allowed in heaven.' [1]

If this legislative authority is given on a subsequent occasion to the church as a whole [2] we should draw the conclusion, warranted by history, that the authority for legislation and discipline was to belong neither to the officers of the church apart from the community nor the community apart from its officers. But of this relation of the officers to the whole community something more will be said.

It accords with the position assigned to the apostles in the beginning of the Acts and in the passages just referred to in the Gospels, that the great final commission, to make disciples of all nations, and to baptize and teach for this end, should be recorded in S. Matthew as given to 'the eleven disciples',[3] apparently, however, in the presence of a multi-

[1] Matt. 16^{18-20}.

[2] Matt. 18^{17-18}: the promise is made to 'the disciples'.

[3] Matt. 28^{16-20}: but it is difficult not to identify this appearance with that mentioned by S. Paul (1 Cor. 15^{6}) to five hundred brethren at once: see Swete *Appearances of the Lord* (Macmillan, 1907), p. 82, and Latham *The Risen Master* (Cambridge, 1904), p. 280 ff.

tude of Galilean 'brethren': and, if others besides apostles were present on the occasion when a similar and earlier commission is recorded by S. John,[1] the weight of the evidence, as it appears to me, is distinctly in favour of regarding that commission also as specially apostolic. The words are 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you:[2] and he breathed on them and said Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained.' The parallel words are 'All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing . . . teaching . . . and lo I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world.' Both commissions are said to have been given to 'disciples': but the latter is specially said to have been given to 'the eleven'. This is confirmed in the appendix to

[1] John 20^{22-24}, cf. Luke 24^{33}: 'They that were with them' were also present. But S. Paul (1 Cor. 15^{5}) speaks of it as an appearance to 'the Twelve'.

[2] Cf. John 17^{18} 'As thou didst send me into the world, so did I send them into the world'—words spoken amongst and with reference to the Eleven—'these men' of verse 20.

S. Mark's Gospel:[1] and it appears to me that the former commission, described by S. John, is in this context most naturally referred to the apostles.[2] It is a general commission to carry out Christ's work; to be pastors of the flock under the Good Shepherd; and it includes such disciplinary authority as belongs to the stewardship in God's household already promised to S. Peter. It is a bestowal in fact upon the apostles generally of the stewardship which at an earlier date was promised to S. Peter, and of the pastoral charge to feed and shepherd the flock of Christ which on the occasion of a later appearance in Galilee was entrusted again to S. Peter in particular, apparently as a renewal of trust after his unfaithfulness.

[1] Mark 16^{14-15}.

[2] Thus in the opening verses of the Acts our Lord is spoken of as if He dealt only with the apostles (Acts 1^{1-8}). Dr. Westcott and Dr. Hort are the leading authorities relied upon on the other side of the controversy. But Dr. Hort speaks very doubtfully. As to the commission being specially to the apostles, he says 'Doubt is possible'; and 'Granting that it was probably to the Eleven that our Lord directly and principally spoke on both these occasions (and even to them alone when He spoke the words at the end of S. Matthew's Gospel) yet it has still to be considered in what capacity they were addressed by Him'. See *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 33: also Dr. Moberly's admirable note, *Ministerial Priesthood*, pp. 127–9.

There existed then in the church from the first, by Christ's own disposition and appointment, in the persons of the apostles, officers of government: commissioned stewards of the divine provisions made for men; pastors of the souls whom the Good Shepherd died to make His own. This appears both from S. Luke's writings and from the first and fourth Gospels. And when S. Paul, the apostle born out of due time, claims to be an apostle, commissioned by Christ Himself, equal to the original Twelve, he plainly claims, and is understood to claim, an office of pastoral authority, a 'stewardship' for God, a 'ministry of the new covenant', in the churches of his foundation and in the church at large.[1]

[1] S. Paul describes himself as an 'apostle of Jesus Christ', i.e. a commissioned officer, and distinguishes himself in this respect from Timothy and Sosthenes (Rom. 1^{1}, 1 Cor. 1^{1}, 2 Cor. 1^{1}, &c.), 'an apostle not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father' (Gal. 1^{1}). He has been divinely 'qualified' with others as 'a minister of the new covenant' (2 Cor. 3^{6}). He has 'received a ministry' (2 Cor. 4^{1}), he is 'a minister of the gospel according to the gift of that grace which God has given him according to the working of his power' (Eph. 3^{7}), cf. Col. 1^{23-25}: he is a 'minister of the reconciliation' won by Christ who 'put in us the word of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5^{18-19}). He is an 'appointed herald, an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles' (1 Tim. 2^{7}). No one can overlook the governing authority which S. Paul claims to hold

Our Lord then appointed an office of ministry and government in His church: and this office was entrusted in the first instance to the apostles for the whole church. But others appear by the side of the apostles, exercising the same general ministry. There are many whom we hear of as 'prophets' and 'teachers' and 'evangelists': there is Barnabas, called (with S. Paul) a 'prophet and teacher', and subsequently an apostle: S. Paul probably reckons him an apostle.[1] There are Andronicus and

and exercise in the churches of the Gentiles as an apostle, and subsequently delegates as a 'charge' to his deputies Timothy and Titus. He claims authority most obviously over the churches of his own foundation: but it is suggested, more deferentially perhaps, but no less certainly in the Epistle to the Romans, see 1^5, 15^{14-17}, 16^{25} ('according to my gospel'). But he appeals to the results of his work, it is said, and to the 'signs' of his apostleship, as evidences of the reality of his mission, as in 1 Cor. 9^2, 2 Cor. 3^{1-3}, 12^{12}. Now so far as miraculous signs are concerned, S. Paul made the same appeal as his Master. Miracles cannot but be regarded by mankind as evidence of divine co-operation. As regards the witness of the converting influence of his work on a large scale, S. Paul appeals to it, no doubt, as any man naturally would. But it did not *make* him an apostle. He was made an apostle by having seen the risen Christ (1 Cor. 9^1), and received from Him and none other (Gal. 1^1) 'grace and apostolate to bring all nations to the obedience of faith' (Rom. 1^5). And, as far as we know, such widespread evidences of power could not have been pointed to by most of the twelve, who yet were undoubtedly apostles with the same authority as S. Paul.

[1] 1 Cor. 9^6.

Junias who were 'of note among the apostles' and were in Christ before S. Paul:[1] there are prophets who, though they are second to the apostles, yet rank with them as founders of the churches.[2] These prophets, teachers and evangelists, or apostles who were not among the Twelve, were plainly important figures in the church. How did they get their authority? and what precisely was it? We must frankly confess that we cannot at all certainly or fully answer this question.

But we remember that S. Luke tells us of 'seventy' beside the Twelve who received from our Lord, in the flesh, a commission similar to theirs. This commission is spoken of as if it were permanent.[3] It may well have been renewed, for such of them as were steadfast, after the resurrection. Thus there may have been not a few, besides the Twelve—Ananias, perhaps, and Andronicus and Junias[4]—who were apostles in the sense of having received from Christ in the flesh a commission like theirs. Again, we cannot say precisely what

[1] Rom. 16^{7}.
[2] Eph. 2^{20}, 4^{11}, 1 Cor. 12^{28}.
[3] Luke 10^{1-20}.
[4] They were Jews, S. Paul's kinsmen (Rom. 16^{7}).

kind of power the church may have acknowledged in men who were recognized as inspired prophets and whose inspiration was certificated by miraculous signs.

Again, the rite of laying on of apostolic hands[1] may have imparted to others, earlier

[1] The idea symbolized in the laying on of hands in the Old Testament is interpreted by Driver (see Oxford Conference on *Priesthood and Sacrifice*, p. 39) as being 'the transmission or delegation of a moral character or quality, or of moral responsibility and authority, or of power to represent another'. With special reference to the New Testament Rackham interprets it as 'the establishment of a vital connexion between two persons through which some gift or power abiding in the one flows into the other' (*Acts*, p. 85). Ordinarily it is the transmission of some gift from one who has it to one who has it not. But in Acts 13^3 a difficulty arises. (1) All the persons concerned—those who laid on hands and those who received the imposition—hold the same status as 'prophets' and 'teachers': and (2) though S. Luke apparently in consequence of the mission received at Antioch calls S. Paul and Barnabas 'apostles' (14^4), S. Paul will not allow us to suppose that he would date his apostolate from any such mission 'through men' (Gal. 1^1). Certainly this is a case where we can ask a question as to the exact significance of an incident which we cannot answer with any certainty. Probably S. Paul would have regarded himself as having received his commission before, but as having it recognized on this occasion by the church and applied, by divine guidance, to a particular field of work. Wherever the laying on of hands is interpreted in the New Testament (Acts 8^{16-18}, 19^6, 1 Tim. 4^{14}, 2 Tim. 1^6), whether as used to complete the gift of Baptism or as conveying ministerial authority, it is interpreted as conveying a gift of the Holy Ghost for life and ministry.

in the history of the Church, as it did later to Timothy and Titus, a quasi-apostolic commission. There are many questions which may be raised about individuals which we cannot answer. For instance, was the apostle Barnabas one of those who had seen the risen Jesus and received commission from Him? Or was he, as the new name given to him by the apostles may imply, first recognized by them as a prophet?[1] Many such questions we cannot answer: but what we are required by the New Testament documents to maintain is this:

(1) that there was a ministry or stewardship instituted by our Lord in the church, and entrusted specially to the twelve apostles (and certainly also to S. Paul) who exercised it, under S. Peter's leadership at first, for the founding and maintenance of the church;

(2) that this general ministry was shared by others beside the Twelve, whose authority we should gather was either given them by Christ on earth, like that of the Twelve, or was derived from the apostles by the laying on of hands, or was the authority of an

[1] Acts 4^{36}.

acknowledged 'prophet' probably certificated by miracles;

(3) that the prophetic gift required recognition by the church and was to be exercised under the control necessary for the maintenance of the common order.[1]

I have already referred to the fact that when the apostles first found it necessary to appoint inferior officers for a subordinate task in the church, they directed the church to choose fit men and themselves consummated their appointment after prayer by the laying on of hands.

S. Luke does not generally repeat himself, so that what he declares to have been done on one occasion may generally be assumed to have been done on other similar occasions where nothing is said about it. Thus if S. Luke later in his story tells us of a return visit to the churches of southern Galatia during the first missionary journey, and informs us that the apostles 'appointed elders for them in every church', we may assume that this was their regular habit; and that the elders, also called bishops, whom we hear of later in other churches,

[1] 1 Cor. 14^{32-40}.

such as Ephesus and Philippi, were appointed by the apostles, and that their appointment was with the laying on of hands. At Ephesus in particular we know that at the time of the Pastoral Epistles this method of ordination existed, and had attached to it the idea of the special gift of the Holy Ghost needed for the pastoral administration.

There is almost total silence in the Epistle to the Galatians about a ministry—only one allusion to 'him that teacheth'—but we know from the Acts that it existed. At Corinth, almost lost to sight amidst the possessors of more striking gifts, there are those who 'governed' and 'helped'. That they were appointed in the way described in the Acts we cannot doubt. This is the sort of matter in which there must have been uniformity as S. Paul moved on from church to church. We hear of a ruler (president) or rulers at Rome; probably they were appointed by the 'notable apostles' who helped to evangelize Rome and establish the church there.[1]

We may then take it as proved, by historical evidence of a cogent kind, that however the

[1] Gal. 6^6, 1 Cor. 12^{28}, Rom. 12^8.

first ordinary local officers of the young Christian churches were designated for office, whether by prophecy pointing to them, or by the choice of the community—and we hear of both methods; their appointment was consummated from above, that is, from the superior authority of the apostles or apostolic men: that the method of appointment was by the laying on of hands with prayer; and that the idea attached to the laying on of hands, besides the idea of the commission of authority, was that also of the bestowal of the gift of the Spirit needed for the ministerial work.

Moreover, when S. Paul was conscious that he was to leave the world by death, and that he had to make provision for a future which at first he had not anticipated, he shows himself, in his Pastoral epistles, very fully occupied with the task of giving permanence to the stewardship for God in the churches. Timothy and Titus are his appointed legates at Ephesus and in Crete: ordained by the laying on of hands:[1]

[1] Timothy was designated by prophecy and appointed by the laying on of hands of S. Paul. 'The gift that was in him' is said to have been given 'through the laying on of my hand'. But the whole presbyterate joined in the acts—'with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery'; and in this phrase S. Paul

to fulfil the whole apostolic function of supervision, and specially the office of ordaining elders in the different churches entrusted to them. Thus, I do not see how it can be denied that the idea of an authoritative ministry instituted by Christ Himself in the persons of His apostles, and perpetuated out of the apostolic fount by delegation from above, through the laying on of hands, is confirmed in the New Testament; and that the rival idea of the churches appointing their own ministers by their own authority receives no confirmation at all.

There is a celebrated passage in which Clement of Rome—the president of that church in the last decade of the first century—writing to the church at Corinth, where there had been some rebellion against the presbyters, expresses himself on the principle of order in the church. It is from so early a writer—the last of the apostles was hardly dead when he wrote—and it is so famous and important, that I will quote it at length. He has been emphasizing the principle of order as

probably conceives himself as included. What happened in Timothy's case would have happened in that of Titus also.

it obtains in nature, in the human body, and in the imperial government. He goes on to find the analogy to the order of the church in the institution of high-priest, priests, and Levites under the old covenant, and in the divine laws of priestly service. Then he continues :—

The Apostles were sent to us with the gospel from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent forth from God. Christ then is from God and the apostles from Christ; it took place in both cases in due order by the will of God. They then having received commandments, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Spirit went forth preaching the gospel that the kingdom of God was about to come. Preaching then in country and town they appointed their firstfruits, when they had tested them in the Spirit, for bishops and deacons of those who were about to become believers. . . .

Our Apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be contention about the title of the episcopate. Therefore on this account, having received perfect fore-knowledge, they appointed the aforesaid (bishops and deacons), and subsequently gave an additional injunction in order that, if they fell asleep, other approved men might succeed to their ministry. They, then, who were appointed by those (apostles) or subsequently by other distinguished men with the consent of the whole church, and who have exercised their ministry blamelessly to the flock of Christ with humility, quietly and without display, and have had good witness borne them by all again

and again, these we do not think to be justly cast out of their ministry. For it will be no small sin to us if we cast out of the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily offered the oblations. . . .

It is shameful, dearly beloved, yes, utterly shameful and unworthy of the life in Christ, that it should be reported that the very steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians, for the sake of one or two persons, is making sedition against its presbyters. . . .

Who therefore is noble among you? Who is compassionate? Who is fulfilled with love? Let him say: 'If by reason of me there be faction and strife and schisms, I retire, I depart, whither ye will, and I do that which is ordered by the people: only let the flock of Christ be at peace with its duly-appointed presbyters.' . . .

Ye therefore that laid the foundation of the sedition, submit yourselves unto the presbyters and receive chastisement unto repentance, bending the knees of your heart. . . .

It is right for us to give heed to so great and so many examples and to submit the neck; and occupying the place of obedience, to take our side with them that are the leaders of our souls.

This language, from one who stands towards the apostles in the position of Clement, so near them both in age and position, cannot but be regarded as impressive in the highest degree. We notice that Clement speaks of an 'additional injunction' to provide for a succession to the first appointed presbyters: and in accordance with this arrangement it had

come about that 'distinguished men', leaders in the church since the apostles, had appointed successors to the first presbyters. This exactly corresponds to the action of S. Paul in appointing Timothy and Titus to provide, as apostolic delegates, for the needs of Ephesus and Crete, after he was gone from the scene. The 'distinguished men' of Clement must have been just such as these apostolic delegates.

II

There is, however, one important point of view—identified specially with the name of Rudolph Sohm[1]—which claims careful consideration in dealing with the development of the ministry. The idea of ecclesiastical ordination, it is said, which you have been maintaining as original in the Christian church is really not original but secondary. The original conception of the church and its various functions was 'charismatic'. The later 'legalist' view of ecclesiastical order involves the conception that an external ceremony can convey indefectible

[1] *Kirchenrecht*, Leipzig, 1892. Mr. Lowrie's book, *The Church and its Organization* (Longmans, 1904), is based upon Sohm's work.

spiritual powers and grace to a man irrespective of his personal character. This idea is alien to the earliest church. The first conception of the church was that of a body differentiated in function by spiritual gifts, which were indeed recognized by the church and 'confirmed' in their possessors by the laying on of hands, but which could never be conceived of in the first age as conveyed by any external ceremony. Each member of the church showed a certain spiritual capacity, which was attributed to the Holy Ghost working in him, and according to his manifested gift did he exercise his function. The church could only note and recognize the endowment which the Holy Spirit had bestowed upon each man—whether the word of wisdom, or the word of knowledge, or faith, or gifts of healing, or prophecy, or ecstatic tongues, or interpretation of tongues. According to his gift he is constituted by God, and not by the church, as an apostle or prophet or teacher or worker of miracles or healer or speaker with tongues or interpreter. Such is the picture of the church given in the early epistles of S. Paul:[1] the picture of a community,

[1] 1 Cor. $12^{4-11, 27-30}$, Rom. 12^{6-8}.

greater or smaller, differentiated by individual gifts of the Spirit, which were more or less evident; which gave to those who possessed them no legal status, but for which the Spirit of love and order found scope and exercise. How utterly remote from such an idea of the church is the later ecclesiastical conception of 'orders'! And yet the earlier conception naturally deteriorates into the later, as law gains upon love, and tradition upon the freedom of the Spirit.[1]

There is an important truth in this view. I set aside to be dealt with presently the problem presented by a corrupt and worldly clergy—spiritual men by office but unspiritual in character. Where this occurs, it is, from any Christian point of view, a monstrous anomaly. And setting this special problem aside, I would make one main criticism upon Sohm's position. It separates, as diverse and opposite, ideas which in the New Testament documents are held together as compatible elements in one whole: viz. the idea of personal spiritual endowment exercised in fellowship according to a spirit of

[1] Sohm sees in the Epistle of Clement the first clear evidence of the later 'catholicism' with its legal conception of church order.

love, and the idea of an outward order, which has from the first the features of a corporate law. Thus the apostles were personally inspired men; but they had also received outward appointment by Christ. The phrase used in the fourth gospel, 'Receive the Holy Ghost,' in connexion with a public act of commission, will not let us separate personal endowment from outward appointment. It would appear as if in certain cases the outward ceremony, whether baptism[1] or the laying on of hands,[2] was only the *recognition* of a gift already received and manifested by unmistakable signs. But even so the outward ceremony was not omitted: and in other cases the communication of the gift itself is attributed to the outward ceremony. Thus S. Luke, who knew S. Paul's mind as well as any man, attributes the gifts of tongues and prophecy to the bestowal of the Spirit through the laying on of S. Paul's hands.[3] He does not shrink from language which implies that an outward ceremony was the means of bestowing the spiritual gift. Nor does S. Paul himself in his epistle to Timothy.[4]

[1] Acts 10^{46-48}. [2] Acts 13^{3}. [3] Acts 19^{6}, cf. 8^{17-18}.
[4] 2 Tim. 1^{6}.

'Stir up,' he says, 'the gift of God which is in thee—the spirit of power and love and discipline —which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.' Again he tells the presbyters at Ephesus, doubtless outwardly appointed, that 'the Holy Ghost made them bishops'. Thus already in the language of the New Testament the sacramental phraseology is indisputably present.[1]

We should indeed readily admit there was in the earliest churches, especially at Corinth, a rich profusion of personal gifts, such as are self-evidencing, and such as the church can do no more than recognize when they occur; such as the gift of inspired utterance or 'prophecy', the gift of ecstatic praise or 'tongues', the gift of interpreting tongues, the gift of miracles. One who possessed these gifts showed them by his words and deeds, and the church could only adore the divine giver and use the wonderful gifts. And doubtless the brilliant display of personal, self-evidencing, spiritual gifts, threw

[1] Harnack (*Expansion of Christianity*, Eng. trans. i, p. 293), after describing sacramental Christianity, adds: '"Ab initio sic non erat" is the protest that will be entered. Perhaps. But one must go far back to find that beginning; so far back that this extremely brief period now eludes our search entirely.'

into the shade the gifts which would naturally be associated with the words 'helps' and 'governments' in S. Paul's list of Corinthian endowments—the gifts of the 'deacon' and the 'presbyter', that is, the ordinary gifts of administration.

It has been, I think, a serious weakness in the later church that it has ceased to expect, or welcome, or use such gifts as those of 'prophecy' or 'healing' or 'miracles', which inspired the courage and confirmed the faith of the earliest church. More will have to be said on this point.

But those special gifts did in fact prove transitory. They cannot be procured at will. They have not been usual in the church. You hear much of them at the beginning of the Acts and in the Epistle to the Corinthians. There is little of them in the Pastoral Epistles. Meanwhile the church was settling down to run a longer course than it had at first expected. It needed officers. It had officers from the first in the apostles, with others reckoned as prophets, or teachers, or evangelists. These had ordained local officers in all the churches with a subordinate authority for government or

assistance, 'presbyters' and 'deacons'. What took place was that the exceptional or miraculous endowments of the earliest church passed into the background, and that the normal gifts of government and administration, which had always been existing and exercised by the apostles and their subordinates, came more and more into the foreground. The list in the Epistle to the Ephesians is more normal than that in the Corinthians. It is apostles, prophets, evangelists (those belonging to the general or apostolic order), pastors and teachers (those being the local officers). In the Epistle to the Philippians, the only figures distinguished in the general body of the church are the bishops (presbyter-bishops) and deacons. In the Pastoral Epistles we find the 'evangelists' or apostolic delegates superintending all the churches of Crete or the church at Ephesus, appointing bishops and deacons, and exercising discipline over them and over the church, the great function of teaching the faith of Christ and exercising the stewardship of God being shared by both the general and the local ministry.

I contend, then, that the idea of the normal ministry or pastorate of souls as instituted by

Christ in the church in the persons of the apostles and perpetuated by ordination out of the apostolic fount by succession, the idea which has possessed the historical catholic church as undoubtedly true, is verified in the documents of the New Testament. I am conscious that I have relied a great deal upon the evidence of S. Luke's two writings; upon passages in the first and fourth Gospels which have no direct parallels in the others; and upon the Pastoral Epistles. But it seems to me that the authenticity of S. Luke's writings is assured; and, granted this, I do not see that there is the slightest ground in reason for disputing the authenticity of the passages in the Gospels, or for doubting that the Pastoral Epistles, whatever difficulties attach to their style and phraseology, represent with historical accuracy the activity and the mind of S. Paul after his first captivity.

APPENDED NOTES.

(1) On the Teaching of the [Twelve] Apostles.

Something must be said about the still somewhat mysterious document, the *Didaché*, or Teaching of the Apostles. It is a church Manual, emanating probably from Egypt, and is generally attributed to the subapostolic age.

It begins with moral instruction intended for catechumens based upon what was probably a Jewish document about 'the two ways'. The tone of the morality altogether is much more Jewish than Christian (cc. 1–6). There follow instructions about baptizing, fasting, prayer and the eucharist. 'The name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost' is twice mentioned in connexion with baptism; and the instructions are formal and precise; again one would say of a somewhat Judaic spirit. The prayers for the celebration of the eucharist contain no allusion to the death of Christ or His body and blood. The meal, says Sabatier truly, 'is much nearer to the Jewish than the Christian ritual.' 'It is an ordinary meal just touched by a breath of religious mysticism'; [1] but the prayers involve belief in the messiahship of Christ, His revelation of truth and life, His church and His kingdom to come. The chief figures in the church within the horizon of the community addressed, are certain 'apostles' and 'prophets' and 'teachers' who visit the churches and, if genuine, should be received as inspired and above criticism; but it appears to be at least as likely as not that they will prove fraudulent; and they are to be tested therefore by observation of their lives and motives. Thus one who plants himself as a visitor upon a church for more than two days at most is a false prophet. (He may, however, settle permanently in a church and will then have a right to tithes of produce, such prophets being the Christian's high-priests.) If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. If he 'orders a table' in the Spirit and then shares the meal, he is a false prophet. The chapters (11–13) describing these wandering missionaries are redolent of fraud. One experiences a profound unwilling-

[1] The eucharistic prayer over the bread appears as a grace before meat in Ps.-Athanasius *de virginitate* 13.

ness to believe—what we have no evidence of elsewhere —that the apostles and prophets and teachers of the New Testament were represented in the next generation, in the age of Clement and Ignatius, by men of this ambiguous reputation.

To return to the document: there follows another chapter about the celebration of the eucharist on the Lord's Day, after open confession of sins made in common, the eucharist being conceived as the pure sacrifice, prophesied by Malachi. Then the members of the church are directed, specially with a view to the celebration of the eucharist, to elect for themselves bishops and deacons, who are to be of pure and well-tried character, because they share the spiritual function (liturgy) of the prophets and teachers; and are, with them, the 'honoured men' of the church. Then there is a final chapter about antichrist, and the end of the world, and the coming of Christ.

There is nothing said in the document about any ordination or appointment of the local bishops and deacons by the superior order; only about their election by the community. This may not be significant. The directions are intended for a local church: and ordination would be a function belonging not to it, but to the superior order of wandering missionaries. It may therefore be passed over in silence as not relevant. In this way the evidence of the *Didaché* may be conciliated in this respect with that of the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles, and Clement of Rome. If not, then we must take our choice between the authority of this document and that of the New Testament writings. Many Protestant critics appear to me distinctly to give the preference to the *Didaché*. This is surely a most mistaken judgement.

I think that without more evidence we may decline to

believe that the order of apostles and prophets and teachers whom we venerate in the New Testament, could have become actually in the next generation what this document suggests. It seems more probable that we have here to do with the wandering missionaries of some Judaic Christian sect of uncertain epoch. But, in any case, we ought not to allow the authority of this ambiguous and anonymous document to countervail the testimony of S. Luke, and S. Paul in his last letters, and S. Clement.

Whether the *Didaché* belongs to the church or to some separated sect, the evidence it supplies of the connexion of Christian with Jewish baptism, and with regard to other Christian customs, is very interesting. But it does not concern us here.

(2) On Dr. Chase's *Confirmation in the Apostolic Age* (Macmillan, 1909).

Since this chapter was in type, the Bishop of Ely has published this interesting book. In it he fully recognizes the prevalence of the sacramental principle in the New Testament, and supports the view taken above of the significance of the laying on of hands (pp. 64, 66). He recognizes also that S. Paul would have taken the leading part among the presbyters, like a modern bishop, in the ordination of Timothy (p. 36). But he interprets 2 Tim. i. 6 f. of *confirmation*, not of *ordination*. There seems to me to be much to be said against this view; but it is new, and needs more consideration than can be given it in the moment of going to press.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EPISCOPATE

We have seen that in the Pastoral Epistles a different situation is represented from that which appears in the Epistle to the Corinthians. The church in the Pastoral Epistles is seen preparing itself to perpetuate the witness and ministry of Christ, without reference to the gifts which have been called extraordinary, which at least cannot be calculated upon or provided at demand—gifts such as inspired prophecy and miracles and tongues, which had held so important a place in the earlier period at Corinth. In the Pastoral Epistles, then, we find in the church a general and a local ministry. The general ministry—which represents the original and central authority in the church—consists of the apostle and his delegates, perhaps known as evangelists, who, though supervising for the time a church or group of churches—Ephesus or the churches of Crete—do not belong to those churches, but represent

the common apostolic control over all churches alike. The local ministry consists of presbyters, also called 'bishops' and deacons.

A great deal has been written on the question of the identity of the bishops and presbyters. No one who reads the Pastoral Epistles, or the Epistle of Clement, can doubt that the names indicate practically the same officers.[1] But it is probable that the presbytery was, among the Christians as among the Jews, the general name for the governing body in any community, while the name bishop (superintendent) described the function of the local officer individually. Probably when an apostle or apostolic delegate was in any community he would have been reckoned as one of the presbyters, though he was an apostle or evangelist and not a bishop.[2] There may have been other

[1] The rulers or presidents of 1 Thess. 5^{12} ('who are over you in the Lord') or Rom. 12^{8}, the 'governments' of 1 Cor. 12^{28}, the 'pastors and teachers' of Eph. 4^{11}, the bishops of Phil. 1^{1}, and the presbyters elsewhere spoken of, must all be regarded as the same officers under different names. This is really not surprising. A modern 'incumbent' is called by as many different names.

[2] See 1 Pet. 5^{1}, 1 Tim. 4^{14}. When later the bishop's title was transferred to the single president of the church, he was still frequently reckoned among the presbyters.

men of standing and position who were reckoned as presbyters but were not bishops, though there is little evidence of this. Practically we must recognize that the presbyters and the bishops of the local church are the same persons. S. Paul can address the presbyters of Ephesus as those whom the Holy Ghost hath made bishops; and he can tell Titus to choose presbyters carefully, because the bishop must be blameless: and Clement can speak of presbyters as holding the bishop's office.[1] In the period of the Pastoral Epistles, then, we have the central or apostolic officers, apostles and evangelists, exercising a more or less general ministry in the churches, and the local presbytery in each church, consisting of the bishops, with the assistant ministry of the deacons.

The question now before us is how this state of the ministry passes into that which is familiar in church history, where there is no general ministry, but every church is governed by a single chief officer, called the bishop, with presbyters and deacons.

In certain districts of the church the answer is fairly plain. At Jerusalem James, the Lord's

[1] Acts 20^{17-28}, Tit. 1^{5-7}, Clem. 44.

brother,[1] exercised already in the Acts a localized ministry, which is identical with that of the later diocesan bishops: that is to say, he is the single head of the church at Jerusalem, with presbyters under him. We know that he was succeeded in his office by Symeon, another relative of Jesus Christ 'after the flesh';[2] and the later succession is recorded. In this case the title of bishop was never applied, as far as we know, to the presbyters, and the bishops succeeded in fact to the apostolic office of James the Lord's brother: but there is reason to believe that here, as at Antioch, the bishop was thought of as succeeding not to the apostles but to Christ. Christ, when He left the world, was conceived of as handing on His own earthly office of president of the brethren.[3] This mode of conceiving the matter is Judaic in character and somewhat repugnant to S. Paul's

[1] Jerome says he was appointed by the Apostles. 1 Cor. 15[7] would lead us to think he was appointed, like other Apostles, only by Christ.

[2] We have it, apparently on the authority of Hegesippus (A. D. 165), that the succession was arranged by a meeting of the surviving apostles and disciples of our Lord with members of His own family.

[3] 'James,' says Hegesippus, 'receives the church in succession (i. e. from Christ) with the apostles.'

conception of Christ as the living Head of the church, constantly present in the whole body; but it is of course strongly suggestive of a monarchy like Christ's in each church.

When we pass on to the next important church of Antioch, we find a witness to episcopacy of extraordinary force in Ignatius the bishop. About 110–117 Ignatius was carried to his martyrdom at Rome. He moves through Asia in the custody of a maniple of soldiers, whom for their harshness he calls 'ten leopards'. But his progress is converted into a sort of triumph. The churches send deputations to him at Smyrna, and he writes letters to the churches of the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, and to the church of Rome. From Troas later he writes to Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Smyrna's bishop, Polycarp. These extant letters from a man who was probably an old man at the end of the first decade of the second century are of extraordinary interest. They are full of a passionate holiness and a rich theology of the incarnation. But we are concerned only with their witness to episcopacy. Ignatius sees nebulous forms of heresy and lawlessness threatening the young churches

with dissolution; and he pleads passionately with them to rally round their officers, that is, the bishop, presbyters, and deacons in each church. The bishop is conceived of, in the fashion described above, as representing Christ while on earth, or God, among his apostles, who are represented by the presbyters. And nothing could exceed the strength of his witness to the threefold ministry as being the only form of church government.

The following extracts will give us the true impression of the tone of the letters :—

'When ye are obedient to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, it is evident to me that ye are living not after men but after Jesus Christ . . . It is therefore necessary, even as your wont is, that ye should do nothing without the bishop; but be ye obedient also to the presbytery, as to the apostles . . . And those likewise who are deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ must please all men in all ways. For they are not deacons of meats and drinks but servants of the church of God. It is right therefore that they should beware of blame as of fire. In like manner let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a church.'

'This will surely be, if ye be not puffed up and if ye be inseparable from Jesus Christ, and from the bishop and from the ordinances of the Apostles. He that is within the

sanctuary is clean; but he that is without the sanctuary is not clean, that is, he that doeth aught without the bishop and presbytery and deacons, this man is not clean in his conscience.'

'Fare ye well in Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves to the bishop as to the commandment, and likewise also to the presbytery.'[1]

'For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ, they are with the bishop; and as many as shall repent and enter into the unity of the Church, these also shall be of God . . . Be not deceived, my brethren, if any man followeth one that maketh a schism, he doth not inherit the kingdom of God. If any man walketh in strange doctrine, he hath no fellowship with the passion. Be ye careful therefore to observe one eucharist, for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup unto union in His blood; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons my fellow-servants.'[2]

'Shun divisions, as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even as where Jesus may be, there is the universal church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast; but whatever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God; that everything which ye do may be sure and valid.'

'It is good to recognize God and the bishop. He that

[1] *ad Trall.* 2, 3, 7, 13. [2] *ad Philad.* 3, 4.

honoureth the bishop is honoured of God; he that doeth aught without the knowledge of the bishop rendereth service to the devil.'[1]

The chief points of his testimony are these:—

1. He has an intensely clear perception that the mind of God for man's salvation has expressed itself not in a doctrine only, but in an ordered society with an authoritative hierarchy.

2. He regards this hierarchy as essentially threefold—a ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. 'Without these three orders,' so Dr. Lightfoot renders the words cited above, 'no church has a title to the name.'

3. He presents the monarchical episcopate as 'firmly rooted' and 'completely beyond dispute'.[2] He bases its authority on 'the ordinances of the apostles'.[3]

4. He regards episcopacy as coextensive with the church. He speaks of the bishops[4] as established 'in the farthest part of the earth'. He knows, therefore, of no non-episcopal area.

[1] *ad Smyrn.* 8, 9.

[2] Harnack *Expositor*, Jan. 1886, p. 16. 'The epistles show the monarchical episcopate so firmly rooted, so highly elevated above all other offices, so completely beyond dispute' . . .

[3] 'The reference of these words is doubtless to the institution of episcopacy.'—Lightfoot on *ad Trall.* 7.

[4] *ad Ephes.* 3, cf. *ad Rom.* 6.

5. He does not speak of the presbyters as if they could supply the place of the bishop when he is gone—that is to say, as sharing essentially the same office. When he alludes to his own church of Antioch or Syria,[1] deprived of him and his office, he speaks of it to the Romans as 'having God for its pastor in his place: only Jesus Christ shall be its bishop and your love'.[2] He does not say how it is to get a new bishop; but he certainly does not speak of the presbyters as able to supply his place.

This testimony of Ignatius, whose letters are undoubtedly genuine, is of overwhelming strength. Plainly the transference of the name of bishop from the presbyters who had undoubtedly borne it, for instance, at Ephesus, had taken place with general agreement, and the bishop, though he was surrounded by his presbyters and deacons, represented, as we should say, a different order. We have very good reasons for believing that the establish-

[1] He speaks of himself as having been bishop 'of Syria' or 'of the church in Syria'. There was apparently no other bishop in the region. It is surprising to find Harnack (*Expansion*, ii. 89) declaring that Ignatius was already 'metropolitan of Syria' with other bishops under him.

[2] *ad Rom.* 9.

ment of 'monepiscopacy'—the rule of the single bishop in each church—had come about in Asia through the influence of S. John the apostle. 'Listen,' says Clement of Alexandria,[1] 'to a legend, which is no legend but very history, which has been handed down and preserved about John the apostle. When on the death of the tyrant he returned from the Isle of Patmos to Ephesus, he used to go away when he was summoned to the neighbouring districts as well, in some places to establish bishops, in others to organize whole churches, in others to ordain to the clergy some one of those indicated by the spirit.' That Clement means by bishops single bishops in each community is certain, for he goes on to speak of the conduct of one of these bishops who 'presided in' a certain city. And, in agreement with Clement, the tradition of Irenaeus and Tertullian ascribes to John the foundation of episcopacy in Asia. 'The series of their

[1] *Quis Dives* 42. Clement's life extended from about the middle of the second century into the third. I do not think that the evidence we have of S. John the Apostle's later residence at Ephesus from Irenaeus and Clement, Polycrates and Papias, can be reasonably resisted.

bishops, traced back to its origin, will rest upon John as its author.'[1]

In the light of the witness of history I do not think that it is possible to doubt that over Palestine, Syria, and Asia there succeeded to the state of things represented in the Pastoral Epistles the monepiscopal constitution, as the only one known form of church government, under the sanction of the apostles, and its position remained uncontested.[2]

Antioch and Asia were in intimate relations with Rome, the capital. Ignatius writes to Rome as one fully cognizant of the distinction of that church. Though he has no occasion to mention the church officers—for he knows of no peril there such as encompassed the Asiatic churches, and made him bid them rally to their bishops—yet it is inconceivable that he could have held the ideas which he did about the episcopate, if he had had any doubt

[1] *adv. Marcion.* iv. 5.

[2] The Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, which are a sort of romance of Clement of Rome based on second-century materials, partly heretical, assure us that when they were written it was plausible to represent Peter as having instituted bishops with presbyters and deacons at Caesarea, Tyre, Sidon, Berytus, Tripolis, and Laodicea.

that Rome had a bishop, as well as presbyters and deacons; and indeed it is unreasonable to doubt that Clement at the end of the first century was in the position of president of the church at Rome, though the title of 'bishop' was not yet used of his office; and after Clement there was a succession of like presidents who at some date, early in the second century, must have been called bishops.[1]

But the development of the ministry in parts of the west is somewhat obscure. The western tradition of the later part of the second century precisely confirms the position of Ignatius, except that the idea of the bishop as representing in each church the monarchy of Christ and the Father is not so prominent. The idea represented is that the apostles or apostolic men instituted bishops in each church and that there had been a succession from them. The first bishops are spoken of first as instituted by the apostles and later as succeeding to the apostles. When Hegesippus, 'the father of church history,' visited the west about A.D. 167,

[1] I would refer for argument as to monepiscopacy at Rome from Clement onward to Lightfoot *Clement*, i. pp. 66–8, 201 ff.: and to Sohm *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 175 ff.

he found a 'succession' of bishops in each city and made a list of the bishops for the purpose of his history at Rome.[1] When Irenaeus, the great representative of tradition, writes against the Gnostics about A.D. 180, he regards episcopacy as among the first principles of the church, and as the supreme safeguard of the orthodox faith. Tertullian, about A.D. 200, uses the same language, and confronts the Gnostic 'churches' with the requirement of the succession. In the mind of these writers, as in Clement of Alexandria, the idea of the single bishop is so well established that the earlier identity of the 'bishop' and 'presbyter' is forgotten, and the fact had to be recovered in the fourth century by a biblical criticism like our own.

The following are quotations from Irenaeus :—

'The true knowledge' (so he calls the Christian religion) 'is the doctrine of the apostles, and the ancient system of the church in all the world : and the character of the body of Christ, according to the successions of the bishops, to whom they (the apostles) delivered the church in each separate place : the complete use (moreover) of the Scriptures which have come down to our time, preserved without corruption, receiving neither addition nor loss ; their public

[1] Quoted by Eusebius *H. E.* iv. 22.

reading without falsification; legitimate and careful exposition according to the Scriptures, without peril and without blasphemy; and the pre-eminent gift of love.' 'The way of those who belong to the church is encompassing the whole world, because it holds the tradition firm from the apostles, and enables us to see that the faith of all is one and the same, while all teach one and the same God the Father, and believe the same dispensation of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and acknowledge the same gift of the Spirit, and meditate the same precepts, and preserve the same form of that ordination which belongs to the church, and expect the same coming of the Lord, and await the same salvation of the whole man, both soul and body.'[1]

'We can recount the number of those who were appointed by the apostles as bishops in the churches, and their successors down to our own time.'

The following is a challenge addressed by Tertullian to the Gnostics:—

'Let them produce the account of the origins of their churches; let them unroll the line of their bishops, running down in such a way from the beginning that their first bishop shall have had for his authorizer and predecessor one of the apostles, or of the apostolic men who continued to the end in their fellowship. This is the way in which the apostolic churches hand in their registers; as the church of the Smyrnaeans relates that Polycarp was installed by John, as the church of the Romans relates that Clement was ordained by Peter. So in like manner the rest of the churches exhibit the names of men appointed to the episcopate by apostles, whom they possess as transmitters of the apostolic seed.'[2]

[1] *c. Haer.* iv. 33. 5, v. 20. 1, iii. 3. 1.

[2] *de Praescr.* 3.

Nevertheless—though the tradition of the second century was so secure, there is considerable doubt how the rule of the single bishop in each church actually came about. Jerome (in the fourth century) tells us that at Alexandria there was a substantial equality between the bishop and the presbyters down to about 230 A. D., in the sense that when the bishop died one of the other presbyters succeeded by mere election, without any further ordination.[1] There is independent evidence of this tradition existing in Egypt in the sixth century; and, though it is difficult to reconcile it with the language of Origen, who was contemporary at Alexandria with the supposed change in the status of bishops, it is commonly accepted as true and cannot be decisively rejected by any one. Again, when Polycarp writes to the church at Philippi (*c.* A. D. 117), he speaks of no officers but presbyters and deacons. Once more there appears to have been no local officer superior to the presbyters, who are also called bishops, at Corinth when Clement wrote about A. D. 95. These facts have led many students to believe, with Lightfoot, that there was a time when at

[1] See *Journ. of Theol. Studies*, Jan. 1902, p. 278.

any rate many of the churches were governed by a substantially equal college of presbyter-bishops, and that only gradually was the chief authority confined to one alone called bishop. I must say that to me this transition is very hard to reconcile with the inveterate and unhesitating strength of the tradition of mon-episcopacy—one bishop only in each church, instituted by the apostles—as it existed in the latter part of the second century. This tradition, and some of the language used by Clement, as well as the witness of Ignatius, lead me to believe that there was indeed a period when there was in many churches as yet no local bishop over the presbyters, but that there were 'distinguished men', to use the phrase of Clement, holding, like Timothy and Titus, apostolic authority, to whom they would have looked at least to ordain to church offices. This is, I think, what Clement's letter suggests. I should suppose that Clement himself and Polycarp were so regarded, though they were already local bishops; I should suppose that gradually men of such quasi-apostolic position either became bishops, or appointed bishops, in each church. This manner of representing the

development of the church organization is suggested by Clement's letter, is not repugnant to the principles of Ignatius, is compatible with the evidence of Polycarp's letter, and accounts for the sturdy tradition of monepiscopacy at the latter end of the second century. But this is purely a matter of historical evidence, and does not affect the question of principle. If all presbyter-bishops held at a certain period in certain churches substantially equal authority and there was no superior over them, then in exercising the chief authority—for instance, in ordaining others to succeed to their office—they were only doing what they were appointed to do. They were in the same position as the presbyters of any modern diocese would be in, if they were all, in modern phrase, in episcopal orders. They were not arrogating to themselves anything which those who set them in their office had not appointed to them. The principle of succession was quite unbroken, whether in each church there were many bishops or one. All that happened was that the Eastern model, the monepiscopal constitution as Ignatius knew it, was adopted in all the churches of the West—some time in the early years of the

second century, and the full pastoral authority to govern and ordain was in future conferred upon only one, the rest receiving the subordinate authority such as belonged to the presbyters known to Ignatius. As I have said, I think the supposed process is very difficult to reconcile with the strength of the monepiscopal tradition as it existed so short a time afterwards. But it is not a matter which affects the principle of succession.

The principle may be stated once more. It is that Christ, the Founder, did, in instituting His church, institute in it a pastoral office, an office of authority, derived not from the church but from Himself; and that the pastoral authority was imparted by those, apostles and others, to whom Christ first entrusted it, to others in different grades of office, to presbyter-bishops in the various churches, to deacons, to apostolic delegates like Timothy and Titus, to single bishops like those instituted by S. John in the churches of Asia; and some of these officers had authority, which others had not, to be chief pastors and to ordain to the ministry those who should come after them. The ministry in all cases was the same stewardship of God in which

all participated; but the ministry of each had a certain definition in the mind of the church at large, which doubtless was made more precise as the generations went on, but which existed from the first, as the office of deacon differed from the first from the office of presbyter, and the office of presbyter from that of apostle or evangelist: and each man knew that he had authority to exercise that commission only which he had received, and that, if higher office was to be given to him, he must wait to receive it. This is the principle of succession. This is the principle which obtained in the church from the first, but with much more distinctness, as soon as ever it became apparent that the church, however eagerly she might still expect the return of Christ, must prepare herself for a course indefinitely long—extending at least beyond the lifetime of the first apostles: and the principle of succession took effect in the establishment sooner or later all the world over, without struggle, of the ministry which prevailed unquestioned down to the sixteenth century, in East and West, the ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

I have described the early episcopacy as in

a sense monarchical. But the 'monarchy' was of a very limited character, in all senses. The primitive Christian bishop was the normal pastor of a small flock in many cases. Each Christian community in each city had its bishop. And each bishop was surrounded by his presbyters, who constituted with him the governing body. And they in their turn had round them the whole body of the brethren: and the higher the common level of the Christian life, the less was the spiritual difference between clergy and laity. The great Metropolitans, the Pope of Rome, the Patriarch of Alexandria, the feudal bishops, the Anglican prelates—these are later growths, and not essential to the constitution of the Christian church. The church of to-day might well proceed by retrospect, and, whether in our church in England, or in some new church of China, the model of the primitive episcopacy, with a bishop for each city, and a close co-ordination of bishops and presbyters, of clergy and laity, might be reproduced. We are not here concerned with this. All we are concerned here to maintain is the principle of the ministerial succession and the devolution of the pastoral authority in the threefold ministry.

It will be remembered that Dr. Lindsay spoke of the 'overthrow of the supremacy of the prophetic ministry' in the second century and says that it 'rent the church in twain'.[1] There was no such overthrow. There was an abundant gift of prophets to the church at the beginning, and so long as prophets were found they were reverenced. Prophecy existed in the church of Ephesus when Timothy received his commission, for it designated him to his office. Later than the New Testament times, Ignatius and Hermas and Polycarp and Melito and many others were reverenced as prophets. Only, when the task before the church was to provide for its continuity, and the continuity of its doctrine, through troublous times, it was not guided to look to the gift of inspired prophecy so much as to the establishment of a ministry, independent of exceptional gifts; which however could exist side by side with prophets like Hermas, whenever God gave such men to the church; if indeed the inspired prophet was not himself, like Ignatius or Polycarp or Melito, the holder of the office of bishop. There is not any trace of the authority of the

[1] l. c. p. 213.

prophet being set aside. But there is evidence that many false prophets came out into the world, and that inspiration was not to be looked to as a substitute for the ordinary ministry, which required only normal gifts.

There was a great outbreak of something claiming to be inspired prophecy in the Phrygian movement, headed by Montanus with two women, Prisca and Maximilla.[1] The church, in part reluctantly, decided that here was no true gift of prophecy, but delusion and fanaticism. It seems to me that the church was right in this estimate—that it could not have decided otherwise.

Montanus's claim to be the organ of the promised Paraclete, sent to call the children of God out into the wilderness to await the speedy coming of Christ, involved amongst other features a grave disparagement of the apostolic gospel as imperfect. It was a disparagement of the gospel dispensation and the Scriptures before it was a disparagement of the church. This is quite fundamental in Montanism: and surely it forced the church into action.

[1] *c.* A.D. 165. Duchesne *Early History of the Church* (Murray, 1909), pp. 190 ff., and Dr. Bigg *Origins of Christianity* (Oxford, 1909), pp. 185 ff., give good accounts of Montanism.

But the church did not reject or disparage the prophetic gifts. It only said that the new prophets were not true prophets at all. No doubt Tertullian was converted to the Montanists, and accordingly, contrary to his earlier principles, set up in his own mind the church of the Spirit as superior to the church of the bishops. But it seems to me that in rejecting this movement of fanatical enthusiasm, just as in rejecting Gnosticism, or later Arianism, the church was doing nothing but its duty: it was rejecting something specifically non-Christian: something contrary to the principles which it had received.

Perhaps no one of these rejections of alien material was accomplished by the church without loss to itself, without some hardening of its spirit. The church suffered loss, it is probable, through the repudiation of Montanism. There resulted, perhaps, a certain undue dread of the enthusiastic and prophetic spirit. To this point we will come back shortly. But it was necessary that Montanism should be repudiated.

It is often spoken of to-day as if it were a movement representing an older Christianity which catholicism was expelling. But this is

not an estimate of it in accordance with the facts. Montanus and his colleagues did, no doubt, claim to be prophets, like the former prophets, and so claimed an authority recognized in past time: but the movement was an innovating movement. 'The sect called itself the New Prophecy because it regarded the work to which it was appointed, not as a reaction, but as a step in advance. It preached not the kingdom of Christ but the reign of the Paraclete, to which the gospel had been the prologue, and the imperfect prologue.'[1] In consequence of the authority which they attributed to their prophets to inaugurate a forward movement in religion, they did not regard the Bible as complete. Thus one main effect of their movement upon the church was to promote the formation of the canon of the New Testament; and the canon, with the creed and the episcopate, came to be the central elements of the permanent and catholic religion which the church existed to embody.

Nor can it be maintained with any real regard to historical evidence that there was going on an 'appropriation' by the bishops

[1] Bigg, l. c. pp. 185, 194.

of the functions of a prophetic ministry, which was a revolution and provoked widespread revolt. There was no revolution: no widespread revolt: only a steady development into one form of government, which is nowhere more impressively exhibited than in the pages of Harnack's history of the expansion of Christianity.[1]

The following propositions must, I think, now be regarded as established:—

1. The religion of Jesus Christ was from the first, and in accordance with His expressed intention, embodied in a visible society, the church, in such sense that there was no other way to become a member of Christ than by becoming a member of the church.

2. The church was held together from the first inwardly by the Holy Spirit and outwardly by a ministry of divine authority, entrusted by Jesus Christ to His twelve apostles, with others perhaps who were not of the number of the twelve, and by them transmitted, with the laying on of hands and prayer, to other men, as need arose, in different grades of office, and

[1] See *Expansion*, ii. pp. 46 ff. There are of course particular statements in these pages with which I cannot agree.

by these in turn to their successors; so that in each generation there have been men in the church who have received in due succession from the apostolic founders of the church the ministry of the word and sacraments, and amongst them men holding a ministry in chief, which carried with it authority to impart the ministry to others. This ministerial succession rests upon the original institution of Christ in principle, but was developed at each step under the 'binding' and 'loosing' authority of the church, to which He gave a divine sanction.

3. Beside the apostles there were inspired prophets who ranked as founders of the church, and there was a wide diffusion of spiritual gifts, such as prophecy, tongues, and miracles, in the earliest church; but exactly so far as the church had to face an uncertain future, it was guided not to trust to these extraordinary gifts but to perpetuate in due succession a pastoral office such as requires for its exercise only normal human qualities, and such a gift of the Holy Ghost as the church from the first believed to accompany the laying on of hands.

4. The ministry in the church, perpetuated

in accordance with this principle of devolution, has taken one form, viz. that in each church there has been a bishop with presbyters and deacons; and the bishops only have held the authority to ordain others to the ministry. This particular form of ministry (monepiscopal) undoubtedly comes from apostolic days. Its establishment as the one form of church ministry may be regarded as due to the authority of the church, but it has been as deeply and universally established in Christendom as the creed or the canon of Scripture.

NOTE.—It is suggested above (pp. 116–17) that in the primitive period men of distinction may possibly have been reckoned in the local presbytery, though they did not hold the office of 'bishop'. In the later age, when the title 'bishop' was reserved to the single presidents of the churches, we find in the canons of Hippolytus (*c.* A. D. 220) a provision that a confessor who has suffered torture should be reckoned as a presbyter without ordination; but must be ordained, if he is to be made a bishop. The presbyterate in such a case would probably be purely honorary; and the provision represents only a passing phase of feeling: see the author's *The Church and the Ministry*, pp. 134 ff.

CHAPTER V

THE IDEA OF THE SUCCESSION AND THE PASTORAL OFFICE

To many to-day the conception of the Christian religion just formulated in propositions seems simply impossible of acceptance in view of what Christianity since the Reformation has become. It does not seem to account for the facts as we now know them, for the work that has been done for Christ, and the place that has been held in the more recent history of Christianity, by bodies quite independent of episcopal successions. To this, by far the most serious of the difficulties presented by the traditional view, we must return shortly. But at present I want to have regard simply to the centuries before the Reformation, and I propose—

(1) to dwell upon the positive meaning of the principle of succession, as being the guarantee at once of the continuity and of the breadth and catholicity of the church;

(2) to examine a little more precisely the nature of the ministry as prophetic, priestly, and kingly;

(3) to consider one chief objection very commonly felt against the whole of the idea and doctrine which I have been seeking to establish, viz. that it attributes to the divine Spirit an unspiritual and mechanical, or legalistic, method of action.

I

Christianity from the first claimed to be catholic and world-wide. The church was to 'make disciples of all nations'. It was to be preached in 'all the world'. The glory and honour of all nations—the best of all that with their manifold faculties they had to offer—was to be brought within the compass of the city of God. Thus it was from the first an essential aim of the church to hold together in the fellowship of one body men of all sorts and races and conditions. So convinced were the first Christians that this was actually to be accomplished, that in their language they habitually anticipate the result and speak of the church as already universal.

But it was a stupendous conception and involved a stupendous task. Religion had been generally regarded as a local matter, a matter of local and national tradition. This had represented broadly the facts of human experience. The Roman Empire, indeed, was feeling the need of a world religion, but was only succeeding in supplying it in the most unsatisfactory fashion. The Christian church at its very beginning realized the difficulty of its task in adjusting the relations of Jews and Gentiles within its communion. But the significant point is that the church knew that the relations must be adjusted and on a basis of equality. S. Paul would not let it adopt any compromise on this point. The one Spirit must dwell in one body—one fellowship for Jew and Gentile alike. When this initial difficulty was overcome, the church went out with a great conviction of its mission to the immense task of evangelizing the world.

Wherein did it find its instrument of outward unity—the outward unity in which the inward Spirit could find expression? The answer is certain. The infant church had found its unity by 'continuing steadfastly in the apostles'

teaching and fellowship'. That is to say, the apostles were the centres of unity. From the apostles and apostolic men was derived, as we have seen, a ministry which, when it was completed, was a ministry of a presiding bishop with presbyters and deacons in each church. This ministry was the centre of unity. Rally round your officers! was the cry alike of Ignatius, of Clement, and of their successors. There was a wild ferment of ideas round about and within the church in the sub-apostolic period: but men were to look to the bishops as the maintainers of the tradition of sound words. Also in their hands was the administration of the sacraments; and the Christians must receive from no hands but theirs or their delegates' the indispensable food, and join in no eucharist of which they were not the leaders. Thus the Christian body in each place was kept together. Thus the continuity of the religious tradition was maintained and 'the hearts of the children were turned towards their fathers'. Moreover the local president, the bishop, received his authority not from the congregation, but from those who were bishops before him, back to the apostles and apostolic

men. Therefore, even in the smallest community, the bishop represented the great church; and the fellowship of the bishops amongst themselves kept all the local churches together. It kept each little congregation in conscious fellowship with a body wide as the world. Thus the bishops stood for local cohesion, for continuity, and for catholicity.

Nations have a pledge of unity and continuity in common language and common customs. Christians boasted 'that they were distinguished from the rest of mankind neither by land, nor by language, nor by customs. They neither had cities of their own, nor exceptional language, nor remarkable mode of life. They inhabited Greek or barbarian cities as the lot of each determined, and obeyed the local customs in dress and food and conduct of life.'[1] But none the less they were to be, all the world over, one visible society; and where else could they have found an effective instrument of continuity and catholicity except in a succession of persons around whom as their officers, appointed with divine authority, all the members of the community must cling?

[1] The *Epistle to Diognetus*, c. 5.

History makes it evident that the forces which tend toward division were at work in the church from the first. 'Views' in religion were never more prevalent—are not more prevalent now—than in the second century. The influence of schismatical personalities was never more deeply felt. Local jealousies and congregational antipathies were then as now a part of human nature. What kept Christians together, on the whole so successfully, was this universally understood obligation of the Christians to adhere to the apostolic ministry.

In course of time the responsibility of each bishop and each community to the whole church came, in the West, to be identified with responsibility to the bishop of Rome, as the centre and guardian of catholic unity. But this was a gradual development in the Western Empire, which in proportion as it consolidated and expressed itself in a definite claim, became a principle of division between East and West. Undoubtedly the principle of the successions of the bishops was as susceptible of the development which it took in the East, into a confederacy of equal patriarchates, as of the development which it took in the West into subordination

to one Pope. Indeed, the original idea of the authority of the church, as it took effect in general councils, involved the consent of independent witnesses—the traditions of all the different churches and episcopates: and is therefore quite opposite to the idea of one central authority, such as the authority of Rome, dominating the whole church.[1] The principle of the successions is older than either the Western papacy or the Eastern patriarchates, and may well admit of other developments yet unknown to history. In itself it expresses in its fundamental or universal character the common mind of Christendom.

The episcopate was intended then to be the bond of continuity and catholicity. After the church had got over its difficulties in adjusting the relations of Jews and Gentiles, it was greatly assisted in its task of expansion by the unity of the Empire, which from early days was perceived to have been a divine preparation for the catholic gospel: but by its close relation to the Empire, its difficulties were only rendered the greater when it extended beyond the

[1] See the author's *Roman Catholic Claims* (Longmans, 1909), pp. 38 ff.

boundary. And when the Empire was divided into Eastern and Western sections, or later when the new nations began to arise, the old difficulty was experienced in full force—the difficulty of keeping men together in one body, whom the natural tendencies of language and feeling and political organization divide.

We are prepared by our Lord's anticipations to perceive, without being overmuch scandalized, a grievous falling short on the part of the church of the divine ideal. In some respects the failure of the church is shocking enough. And in respect of the single matter of unity, it has been violated by the separation of East and West: and often, where it has been maintained, it has been maintained by repressive measures, utterly discrepant with the Spirit of Christ. The record of the catholic church in the suppression of heresy and schism is stained with injustice and savage persecutions.

And yet, in spite of faults and failures and disgraces, the ideal of the catholic society was in a large measure realized. The great church did prove to be a home for all sorts of men—a training-ground for fellowship and brother-

hood. It did stand for breadth and liberty—in spite of occasional outbreaks of fanaticism.

This is remarkably true in the early centuries, and is especially apparent in the influence of the two greatest churches of Rome and Alexandria. Alexandria stood for a broad, conciliatory and philosophic temper in religious thought: and did much to diffuse this temper over the whole church. Christian doctrines were in fact propagated in an atmosphere of free discussion. And Rome stood for moderation of discipline against a whole succession of bigots and extremists. We are accustomed in our days to hear the Anglican Communion ridiculed by 'Catholics' for embracing people of very different opinions. On all but the most fundamental subjects the catholic church of the early centuries did this; and we find an Augustine glorying in the fact.

'Cyprian and those with him walking in most persistent tolerance, remained in unity with those who taught differently from them.' 'Though they held that heretics and schismatics did not possess baptism, yet they chose rather to have communion with them when they had been received into the church without baptism . . . than to be separated from unity; according to the words of Cyprian—"Judging no one and depriving no one of the right of communion if

he differ from us." . . . Behold, I see thus in unity Cyprian and others his colleagues, who on holding a council decided against the validity of baptism given outside the church. But again, behold, I see in the same unity that certain men think differently in this matter, and do not dare to re-baptize. All of these catholic unity embraces in her motherly breast, bearing each other's burdens in turn, and endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, until the Lord should reveal to one or other of them if in any point they think otherwise than as they should.' [1]

After the so-called conversion of the Empire and of the Teutonic races the level of the Christian religion is perceptibly lowered. 'Catholicism appeared as the religion of masses', [2] and of rude and coarse masses. But all the manifestations of the catholic spirit in the middle ages bear a character of vastness and popularity. The church stood for the people. And on the whole, prior to and apart from the rise and influence of the Inquisition, the church gives the impression of a tolerant—sometimes too tolerant—fellowship. It would have men at all costs members of one body. Thus it did give men, as nothing else in history has ever done, a sense of the unity of humanity, high

[1] See Augustin *de bapt.* ii. 3-6, v. 25.
[2] Acton *History of Freedom*, p. 200.

and low, rich and poor, male and female, of all nations and races, one body in Christ.

It made the inhabitants of every parish in England feel as members of one family round the altar of God; and it linked their local fellowship, and again their national fellowship as Englishmen, on to the large society of the catholic church; and thus made them conscious of wide and yet practical responsibilities. The church did all this, in a measure successfully; and under God, or rather we should say in God the Holy Spirit, it was the successions of the bishops which enabled the great victory over the separatist tendencies of human nature to be so far won, as at least to reassure us that the unity of humanity in Christ is a realizable idea.

II.

What is the character or function of the Christian ministry?

Christ the 'great shepherd of the sheep' fulfilled his pastoral office as *prophet* and *priest* and *king*; but He gave a new sense especially to the two last terms of this series, by the kind of kingship and the kind of priesthood

which explicitly or by implication he assigned to Himself. Again, the whole society through which he expresses himself in the world, the church which is His body, partakes of His office. It too is prophetic, because it bears the witness of Jesus. It is priestly, because it lives and has free access to God in the power of the reconciliation which He has won by His sacrifice; and because it is His instrument for reconciling the world. It is royal, because it is the family of Christ the King; it is of the blood royal, and possessed by His spirit; and it proclaims and enforces by His own weapons the sovereignty of Christ in the world. But, in all its functions, the church acts through and with its appointed officers. Therefore we should expect to find the ministers or officers of the church in some special sense prophets and priests and kings, not in separation from the general body of the faithful, but as organs of its common life.

(*a*) This is especially plain in the matter of 'the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy.' The documents of the New Testament assume that the whole people is responsible, in a very high degree, for holding,

understanding and maintaining the truth: but, equally plainly, they show us both the apostolic, or general, and the local ministry under the gospel entrusted therein with a special commission and responsibility. We may find a sufficient illustration of this in what we know of the church of Ephesus.

First it had to do with apostles and prophets, founders of the church; men who, before all else, are commissioned messengers of the gospel and heralds of the divine word to men. In his epistle to the Ephesians S. Paul gives us the loftiest conception of his teaching office as an apostle and minister of God's world-wide purpose in Christ; and in his speech to the Ephesian elders in the Acts we have this lofty ideal given flesh and blood, as it were, in a most moving picture of S. Paul's labours in declaring to them 'the whole counsel of God'. Then, when he needs to appoint Timothy as his delegate to the Ephesian church, he gives us in the pastoral epistles a vigorous picture of the kind of authoritative guardian of the 'pattern of sound words' which Timothy's 'gift' qualifies him to be. But once more this 'stewardship of divine mysteries' (or revelations) is shared

by the local ministry of presbyter-bishops. They are called 'pastors or teachers';[1] they are to be chosen as men 'apt to teach'.[2]

Finally it is specially Timothy's function to provide for a succession in the teacher's office. 'The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.'[3] These, no doubt, are the presbyter-bishops, whom it is Timothy's office to select and ordain. In the following centuries of the church's history, the maintenance of the sacred tradition of teaching is the characteristic office of the bishop, and is shared by the presbyters in greater or less proportion.

Undoubtedly, then, in the early conception of the office of Christian pastor, the function of the teacher is given predominance. The emphasis, sometimes the almost exclusive emphasis, laid in later ages upon sacramental powers of the

[1] Eph. 4^{11}. In Acts 20^{28}, they are to 'tend' or 'govern' the flock: but it is with special reference to the perils of false teaching.

[2] 1 Tim. 3^{2}. There were, however, apparently, members of the presbytery at Ephesus who were not teachers, whose office was not 'to labour in the word and doctrine': see 1 Tim. 5^{17}.

[3] 2 Tim. 2^{2}.

priesthood (sacrifice and absolution) seriously alters the primitive conception. And the language of a great and wise Roman Catholic commentator, Estius (upon 1 Tim. 3^{13}), is well worth quoting:

'It may be asked why, among the other things which the apostle requires from the bishop and deacons, he makes no mention of the administration of sacraments, of altar, and of sacrifice which the bishop should offer and at which the deacon should assist. . . . But there is a ready reply. The apostle gives no injunction on these subjects—first, because they are easier and therefore of less importance, if the office of bishop and deacon be regarded as a whole. For it is not the case, as the mass of men think, that the episcopal or pastoral care consists chiefly in the conferring of holy orders at their proper seasons, the consecration of churches, the confirming of the baptized, and the administration of the other sacraments at the right times and to the proper persons, and the offering of the sacrifice of the mass for the living and the dead: but the chief function of the bishop and of any shepherd of souls is the preaching of the word of God.'

But it must not be ignored that, while the office of the normal pastor in the church is thus the office of maintaining and propagating and guarding the common tradition of the faith, tradition is always liable to become stereotyped and hardened, and to be degraded as it passes down from age to age. The enthusiasm of one gene-

ration becomes the routine of the next, and by the mere lapse of time men everywhere tend to 'make the word of God of none effect by their tradition'. It is therefore most noticeable that the inspired prophet appears, as in the Old Testament over against the priest, so in the New side by side with apostles and evangelists, and teachers and pastors. I think the church ought to have given a great deal more attention to this fact than till quite recently it has done. Its tendency has been to relegate the prophets to the Old Testament. But they are undoubtedly prominent figures in the New.

It may be said that they were only given to the first age of the church; and that the gift of prophecy was speedily withdrawn, like the gift of healing and other miracles.

But I cannot help thinking that the church ought to have lived in more eager expectation of exceptional gifts, such as cannot be provided at demand, but can be reverently welcomed and used when they are given. Established authorities in the church have always tended to suspect prophets. So the Scribes and Pharisees resented being taught the true meaning of their religion by the lay prophet from Nazareth.

Such has always been the tendency of official teachers. The Montanist prophecy was doubtless wild and unsettling, and its rejection inevitable; but the rejection of the Montanist prophets may have done something to harden the heart of the church against all prophets who should come with a message from God without any ecclesiastical selection or ordination. I think this has been one of the fundamental defects of the church; it has loved order and discipline and tradition with a one-sided devotion. It has not been alive to the peril of making the word of God void by the force of one-sided tradition, or to the need in every age of prophets, who speak from God simply because they must, to recall men to some forgotten aspect or element of the word of God. I seem to see in almost every Protestant sect which has split off from the Catholic body, at the root of the division, not a schismatical desire to establish a separate worship, but the sense of some truth, which the church was neglecting or contradicting, and which God's Spirit had put it into the heart of some man, or group of men, to recognize and revive. It is easier, no doubt, to maintain unity, if liberty of prophesying is suppressed.

But this is the tyranny which itself produces and nourishes the avenging power which will destroy it. With a freer liberty of speech allowed to those who believe themselves to speak with the Spirit, the church might have presented at times a less well disciplined aspect, but there would have been far less schism in the body.[1]

(*b*) Are the church officers rightly called 'priests'? We shall agree with Dr. Denney when he says, 'There is not, as in the nature of the case there could not be, any trace in the New Testament of a Christian priest making sacrifice for sin and mediating *again* . . . . between God and man.'[2] The whole Christian life is lived under the shelter of a mediation once made and perfected: a sacrifice once

[1] It is the function of the *prophet* to give the fresh application, or to revive the forgotten aspect, of the word of God: while the function of the bishop is rather that of keeping the church together and maintaining the common tradition. The common cry, 'Why do not the bishops lead?' (in this or that fresh movement) is based on a mistaken conception of the bishop's office. The prophet is to lead: the bishop rather to moderate and hold people together, while the prophet agitates them. But he ought to be tolerant of the prophet, and not resent the trouble involved in the stirring of the waters, or be jealous of the superior influence of the unofficial person.

[2] Hastings *Dic. of the Bible*, iv. 100, s.v. PRIEST. The italics are mine.

offered: a reconciliation once won. The priestly function of the Christian church—and it is a kingdom of priests—is, according to the New Testament, to rejoice in, to use, and to apply this reconciliation: not to make it or to add to it. But in all its worship and discipline, and in all its work of extension, the church was continually exercising its priesthood: offering up spiritual sacrifices, absolving or retaining sins, receiving or imparting spiritual gifts. And it did this as one body, acting through its appointed officers; and these officers came to be called priests, as being, like the Old Testament priests, agents and officers of a priestly body, by a divine appointment. The title came to be applied to them partly as chief teachers, partly as ministers of the eucharist, partly as officers of discipline. When the priestly title came to be applied freely to the church officers, it was given first to the bishops and then to the presbyters as sharing their office. The use begins with the second century. Earlier than that the church officers are not called priests:[1]

[1] The title not at first applied to the ministers of the Church is the Greek term *ἱερεύς* and the Latin *sacerdos*. (The English

but it must also be remembered that, except in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is not in the New Testament called a priest. The fact is, the conception of priesthood, as admitted by our Lord, was so unlike the conception of the sacrificing priest, whether Jewish or pagan,—and in the ordinary sense of the word Christ had so certainly *not* been a priest—that the hesitation in calling Him so is intelligible enough. It is said even in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'If he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all'[1]—that is, not a priest as known on earth. It ought not, therefore, to surprise us that whether in the Jewish or pagan world there should have been hesitation about calling Christian apostles and bishops and presbyters by a title so apt to mislead. Probably in a heathen country familiar with sacrificing priests to-day, the church had better exercise a similar hesitation.

But this is a question of words. The Christian church had to apply and use

word 'priest' is of course derived from 'presbyter', an original title of the Christian ministry.) But the words λειτουργός, λειτουργεῖν, which are used of the Christian ministry in the New Testament (Acts 13^2, Rom. 15^{16}), are technical words for priestly ministry, both Jewish and Pagan.

[1] Hebr. 8^4.

Christ's priesthood and His reconciliation. It did this by admitting to baptism and by then administering the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. It did this whenever the necessity arose of laying scandalous members under sentence of exclusion, and then, when they had sufficiently given evidence of penitence, 'forgiving them in the person of Christ.' It did this whenever it celebrated the eucharist, which, in some sense or another, was certainly regarded from the first as the 'church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving', and as standing in some very special relation to the sacrifice of Christ and the offering of His body and blood. And all these spiritual functions the church fulfilled as one body through its appointed officers. The apostolic ministry was thus a 'ministry of reconciliation' essentially, and so it appears in the New Testament.

There also appear from the first certain indications of a distinction of functions within the ministry. Thus only those of the superior or apostolic order lay on hands to supply the gift of the Holy Spirit, or to ordain to the ministry; and the local office of presbyter-

bishop is quite distinct from that of deacon. But we are not told in the New Testament whether on an emergency any Christian could perform any ministerial act; for instance, whether he could celebrate the eucharist, as it has been commonly understood that he can administer baptism. We have, however, the conception of the society acting as a whole, with legislative powers and a ministry of divine appointment. It may well have been left for the church to decide, according to the wisdom given to it, as to the precise allocation of functions. Its decision, as the New Testament would have us believe, would have heavenly sanction. Thus, in fact, it was the decision of the church, early, unanimous and final, that only a bishop can validly ordain, and only a presbyter celebrate the eucharist.

We must conclude that when once it was established that Christ was a priest—the great High Priest, and His church a priestly body, it became inevitable and right that the ordained officers of that body should be called priests. So it came about. The bishops were first called priests; and gradually the term was applied to the presbyters also.

But the idea of priesthood in Christianity needs to be constantly purified by reference to the sense in which Christ was a priest. Actually in the church the idea of the priest has been at certain periods and in certain regions allowed to become too simply that of a man who in virtue of his ordination has the power to offer sacrifices for the quick and the dead, and to absolve his fellow men. This definition of his office by a specific power to perform certain rites, having efficacy with God on behalf of others, brings the idea of a Christian priest perilously near to the pagan standard of priesthood which Christianity superseded. I cannot but think that the safeguarding of the idea of priesthood lies partly in the maintenance of the corporate conception of the priest's office—viz. that he is the divinely constituted organ of a body which is throughout priestly: partly also in the true conception of sacrifice.

Now the true, the specifically Christian, conception of sacrifice is determined by one point: viz. that the only sacrifice acceptable with God is self-sacrifice, the sacrifice of the person. The sacrifice of Christ was the sacri-

fice of the person. He through eternal Spirit offered *Himself* without spot to God. In the eucharist, what gives its meaning to the rite is His eternal offering of Himself present among us. Whatever we offer at the altar—prayers or praises, alms or oblations of bread and wine—gains its acceptance through its relation to His sacrifice. Again, what we offer there must be the offering of persons, of ourselves, first as showing our ready will by our gifts, and then, after our communion in His body and blood, as offering ourselves in Him. 'Here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves.' Once more, we may present other persons for acceptance in Christ. It is as offering human beings for acceptance by the consecration of the Holy Ghost that S. Paul describes himself as a priest under the gospel making sacrifice.[1] I do not think that, so long as this really Christian idea of sacrifice is kept fully in view, the conception of ministerial priesthood could ever be made mechanical, or could ever fail to be kept in the context of the whole pastoral office,—the office of teaching and

[1] Rom. 15^{16}.

guiding and feeding human souls in order to present them perfect in Christ Jesus.[1]

(*c*) We need not linger long over the kingly office of the ministry. It is implied in the phrase *shepherding* the sheep, which is the regular word for *ruling*. But it is a ruling which is to be also a feeding. The steward of God in the divine household is to give to each member of the family his portion of meat in due season: he is to exercise the authority of the father of a family which sometimes makes necessary stern chastisement—the use of 'the rod'. We see S. Paul at this work. We see him instructing Timothy and Titus to fulfil it, even if it involves a 'sharp' rebuke. The apostolic legate, like the apostle, exercises discipline over all the members of the church, including the local clergy; and this full function passed to the bishops in each church; but both in apostolic days and for centuries after the laity were associated in the work of discipline. It is the whole church at Corinth that S. Paul calls upon to excommunicate the incestuous man; and when he bids them receive

[1] Of course I must refer on this point to Dr. Moberly's great work on *Ministerial Priesthood* (Murray, 1897).

the same or a different offender now penitent, he speaks of the punishment inflicted upon him as inflicted by the majority.' [1]

Morally the character of this rule of the pastors in the church was to be determined by the character of Christ's kingship. And there is hardly any more beautiful expression of the way in which self-sacrificing service can minister to rightful authority than in S. Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders. And the tradition of pastoral rule passed down the centuries in its noblest form. The books which begin to appear in the fourth century on the pastoral care are quite noticeably full of what Christianity had introduced into the world, that is, a singular and tender regard for human individuality and the needs of the individual soul.

III

I have done my best to state the ideas of the succession and the ministry with moderation. Certainly for many centuries of the church catholic the ideas were held with moderation; the conception of the Christian priest or pastor was neither unspiritual nor autocratic. But it

[1] 1 Cor. v. 13, 2 Cor. ii. 6.

was the conception of an officer, in virtue of his ordination to office, holding spiritual powers, which were in him because he was an ordained man and not because he was a good man. It was the duty of the bishop or presbyter to be good. Nay more, it was the duty of the church to deprive him of the exercise of his office if he ceased to live worthily. But even so, would not his priesthood and its power remain in him? The church was so conscious of the incongruity between the ministry of spiritual gifts and personal unworthiness, that it was very loath to answer this question in the affirmative: to affirm that the endowment of ordination is an indelible character, and that in the fullest sense the unworthiness of the minister hinders not the grace of the sacraments. The church was much quicker to affirm that the unworthy minister ought to be removed and should no longer minister. If at last the church was compelled by a true logic—as it undoubtedly was—to say that the sacrilegious ministry of the unworthiest priest was as valid as the ministry of the saint, it was always with the sense that the unspiritual minister of spiritual gifts was a monstrous anomaly. He

represents a grotesque failure of the divine intention in the Christian ministry.

To some people apparently the possibility of this failure condemns the root idea of the ministerial succession, so far as it is external. 'The theory assumes that God has been pleased to attach the power of the Holy Ghost to certain mechanical acts accompanied by the recital of particular formulae, so as to produce consequences of a distinctly supernatural order, whenever those mechanical conditions are complied with.' Therefore, it is argued, it must be false.[1]

To this I reply: the theory only assumes this mechanical aspect where it is misapplied by unspiritual men. The rejection of it implies that we cannot believe that God would have—so to speak—rendered Himself and His gifts liable to be so abused. But that is precisely what is not true. I confront my objector with this staggering problem. There is no human power conceivable so spiritual as the power to bring into being an immortal soul or spirit. But God has given to men this power by

[1] See Dr. Hay M. H. Aitken *The Mechanical versus the Spiritual*, pp. 5 ff.

human generation; and the power to give birth to a human personality depends on physical means which have been habitually used with utter carelessness and the grossest materialism. Thus any man and woman are allowed (if I may reverently say so) to force the hand of God by bringing into the world a spirit endowed with spiritual power for good or evil incredibly great, and with a destiny of immortality. We almost shrink from thinking out all that is involved in this indisputable fact, lest our faith should stagger. But surely when once the fact is faced that God does entrust to commonest man the greatest of all spiritual powers under conditions the most liable to mere materialism, the objection to the doctrine of ordination grace because it is liable to a similar misuse becomes impossible. We are driven back on the position that the misuse of spiritual opportunity is a grievous sin, and that the Christian society must do its best to guard against its occurrence, but that its possibility at the last resort is a risk which God wills to run. It is part of the risk involved in human freedom.

Our Lord is recorded to have said: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat.

All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe; but do not ye after their works.' That is to say, we must recognize the divine office even in the case of bad men when they hold it. In fact, the maintenance of a continuous catholic society involved the maintenance of a continuous ministry, propagated by outward means. He who holds this ministry is to let the thought of his high vocation consecrate his whole being to the service of God. But if he fails to do so, God will still work through him the continuous purpose for which the church exists.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT SITUATION

Of the things which we have been saying, this is the sum: there is not anything which more certainly expresses the mind of Christ than the process by which, under the inspiration of Pentecost, the catholic church emerged into the world as the Spirit-bearing body. And as the church appears in history running its long course, there are certain external features which everywhere give the great body its distinctive character. They are the creed, which—substantially the same everywhere—expresses the elements of the tradition of the faith: the canon of sacred scriptures, which is the church's standard of reference to keep it true all through its developments to the apostolic pattern: the administration of the sacraments, which are the instruments alike of its divine and human fellowship: and the successions of its officers—bishops, priests and deacons—who hold the ministry of the word and sacraments,

who are the bond of continuity and coherence both in each local society and the whole world-wide and age-long body.

These four external factors of the unity of the catholic church took shape by an historical process which, especially as concerns the ministry, we have endeavoured to trace: but they are coherent and indissoluble elements in one structure: they express one formative movement—the mind of the whole Spirit-bearing body. There is nothing in the Christianity of the New Testament for which they do not afford a home: and they are nothing else than the fulfilment of ideas and principles which the New Testament ascribes to the apostles and to Christ Himself, who founded the church and the ministry in the church.

The root principle in all this is that, under the teaching of Christ, men of all sorts and kinds are to be drawn to God, and disciplined and perfected for God, through membership in one body. The Bishop of Southwark[1] has warned us of the duty of recognizing proportion in the things of faith. He has given us accordingly a list of propositions that are 'more

[1] *The Fulness of Christ* (Macmillan, 1909), p. 70.

certain' than others. I would imitate his phraseology, and say: we are, or ought to be, more certain that disciples of Christ are to be members of the catholic church, holding its faith, living its life, using its sacraments and adhering to its legitimate officers, than we can be of any of the more particular doctrinal conclusions which may seem to us to follow from the acknowledgement of the name of Jesus.

I

The divine authority of the episcopate in the church as the instrument of the church's continuity was so undisputed for so many centuries that nothing but abuses in the hierarchy, which shocked the consciences of men and obscured its spiritual character, could ever have brought it into serious question. The abuses in the church were, in fact, so much in the mind of the leaders of the Reformation in the sixteenth century that they were blinded to the deep spiritual purpose of much that they were destroying.[1]

Undoubtedly there are in the New Testament

[1] This is most apparent in Luther's writings and in the Fourth Book of Calvin's *Institutes*.

and in our Lord's own words, ominous anticipations of an unfaithful church and an unworthy ministry. Nevertheless the spectacle presented to the pious and thoughtful minds of the period before the Reformation was unspeakably shocking. Corruption was deep and widespread. It is denounced by councils and individuals, by mystics and humanists and men of affairs. They sigh and they cry, like the faithful in Jerusalem of old, over the abominations that are done in the midst of them: over the corruption and tyranny of the curia and the hierarchy: over the moral abuses which cry out to heaven: over the entanglement of scholastic disputations and decisions which obscures the simplicity of the gospel. We seem again to hear, in various tones, the great indictment of the rulers of God's people: 'Thus and thus and thus have ye made the word of God of none effect by your tradition.' On the whole the protests of right-minded men in the Renaissance period were in vain. The failure of the reforming councils in the fifteenth century is evidence of the refusal of the church to reform itself in time to avert the judgement and the catastrophe. 'When

Eugenius IV directed Cesarini to dissolve the Council of Bâle, the Cardinal replied, that if he obeyed they would be thought to be mocking God and men, and to have abandoned the notion of reform.'[1] The judgement on the church came in the great rebellion against the hierarchy, which, associated with the appeal to the word of God in Scripture, constituted the essence of the Reformation.

The Reformers would all have denied that they were forsaking the true church. But undoubtedly they did consciously and confessedly, though under the plea of necessity, rebel against the hierarchy—the pope and the bishops and what Calvin called 'their church'. 'It was necessary for us to withdraw from them in order to approach to Christ.'[2] Undoubtedly there lay at the root of the whole Reformation movement the denial of the principle of the succession which we have seen reason to believe to be of divine authority.

Powerfully and with tremendous moral seriousness, Luther proclaimed the principle that the

[1] Acton *Lectures on Modern History* (Macmillan, 1906), p. 90.

[2] *Institutes*, iv. 2. 6.

church is founded on the word of God: that where that pure word is preached and believed there is the church, though it consist but of two or three, and within the church all are essentially equal and equally priests. The church can and indeed must appoint officers to minister the word and sacraments; but this is for seemliness and order's sake: all Christians are essentially the same in powers.[1] Dr. Lindsay is undoubtedly right. 'This principle of the priesthood of all believers [so mistakenly understood] is the one great religious principle which lies at the root of the whole Reformation movement.' And it has one clear result. 'It can readily be seen how thoroughly it excludes the idea that a priesthood, clerus, or any authorized order or organization is indispensable for the constitution of the church. The whole power of ecclesiastical rule was in the word of God, and this power is given to all.'[2]

The Reformation is so large and confused a movement that it cannot be discussed with any thoroughness in a short compass. But

[1] Dr. Lindsay *History of the Reformation* (Clark, 1907), i. 240 f., 441–4. Sohm *Kirchenrecht*, 463 f. [3] l. c. 144.

[2] Lowrie *The Church and its Organization* (Longmans, 1904), p. 37.

I think we are on the safest ground in adopting Dr. Lindsay's interpretation of its main principle. There was a sharp difference between Luther's position that the 'two or three' constitute a church with all its powers, and the position of Zwingli, who would recognize the visible church, by which he meant the local church, only in a formally constituted society, a position which Calvin developed into the most explicit and peremptory demand for a particular kind of constitution (the 'Presbyterian') as the only one which had scriptural, i.e. divine authority. There are important differences between Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin as to the relation of pastoral to disciplinary authority in the church, and as to the relation of the church to the civil ruler. But all these differences belong to a region upon which we need not enter. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin are at one in basing the church upon the preaching of the pure word of God, which they could not find in 'the Pope's church': and in repudiating with contempt the idea that the power to ordain pastors for the true church of Christ depended upon succession to the officers—whether bishops or priests—of that communion

of which Calvin said, 'the form of the legitimate church is not to be found either in any one of their congregations or in the body at large.'[1]

[1] *Inst.*, iv. 2. 12. Calvin gives no such clear account of the ultimate authority of the ministry in the Reformed churches as Luther does: 'We find,' he says, 'that it is a legitimate ministry according to the word of God, when those who appear suitable persons are appointed with the consent and approbation of the people; but that other pastors ought to preside over the election, to guard the multitude from falling into any improprieties, through inconstancy, intrigue, or confusion.' How these 'other pastors' are to be constituted in the first instance does not clearly appear. But in one passage he speaks of a fresh and extraordinary mission from God of apostles and evangelists to reconstitute the church. 'I do not deny that even since that period [the period of the first apostles] God has sometimes raised up apostles and evangelists in their stead, as he has done in our own time. For there was a necessity for such persons to recover the church from the defection of Antichrist. Nevertheless I call this an extraordinary office because it has no place in well constituted churches' (*Inst.* iv. 3. 4). This means that the normal pastorate in the Reformed churches derives its authority from this new mission from God of Evangelists of the true gospel. That is, I think, really Calvin's view. At any rate, he totally repudiates the 'pretensions of the Romanists' to an uninterrupted succession (iv. 2. 2–3), and the exclusive claim of the bishops to create presbyters (iv. 5. 4)—not on the ground that this right belongs to presbyters also, but on the ground that there has been in the papal church no succession preserved of the *true* ministry which depends upon the preaching of the word of God. 'This is the goodly calling, in consequence of which bishops boast of being successors of the apostles. The power of creating presbyters, they say, belongs exclusively to them. But this is a gross corruption of the ancient institution: for by their ordination they create, not presbyters to rule and feed the people,

This view of the Reformation would be accepted by the vast majority of Protestants to-day. There exists, however, a school of Presbyterian theologians who seek to maintain, apparently, the whole principle of apostolic succession, only contending that the power of ordination belongs always essentially to the presbyter as well as the bishop, and can be validly exercised by him, at least on an emergency. On this basis they would maintain that the valid succession has been maintained in the Presbyterian churches; and would draw a distinction between the Presbyterians on the one hand and the mass of the Protestant bodies, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, &c., on the other [1].

but priests to offer sacrifice' . . . 'And this is not sacrificing to God but to demons' (§ 9). He denies altogether that the existing bishops, priests, and deacons are bishops, priests, and deacons of the true church of Christ. It is quite compatible with this position that Calvin should say that there is no anathema they do not deserve who would refuse obedience to the hierarchy of bishops *if only the hierarchy will accept the law of Christ.* What he would have meant by accepting the law of Christ we know: see *De Necess. Reform. Eccl.*, quoted by Harold Brown, on Art. 23 § 1.

[1] See Dr. Cooper and others in *The Pentecostal Gift* (Maclehose, 1903), pp. 165, 166, 173 ff., 178 ff., 195: 'The Reformed church believed in the necessity of apostolic succession through

There does not seem to me to be evidence that, on the catholic principle of orders to which they appeal, they could justify the claim that the presbyterian churches have 'maintained the succession', even if the fundamental identity of presbyter and bishop were admitted. Certainly, as I have said, the need for the maintenance of such a succession from the mediaeval priesthood would have been indignantly repudiated by the founders of the Reformed churches.

But I speak with much more certainty when I say that the claim that a sixteenth-century presbyter had, even on an emergency, the same authority as a bishop to ordain, is totally unjustifiable. The catholic principle of orders is that a man must have received the authorization to perform whatever ministry he can validly perform by devolution from above. It may be that in the earliest age there were churches where all the presbyters were ordained with the full pastoral powers of the later 'bishop', and either acted together as a college, or at least could succeed to one another in the

presbyters or bishops acting in that capacity.' This position I believe to be fundamentally unevidenced and untrue.

exercise of the episcopal office without any further ordination. In that case the presbyter who 'ordained' his successors was doing what he had received the authority to do in his own ordination. Afterwards, on this hypothesis, the full episcopal powers were reserved everywhere to one man only in each church, as was already the case in the churches of Palestine, Syria, and Asia, and the presbyter received only the lower status which had already belonged to presbyters in those other churches, or such as had belonged to the presbyters in all churches, while apostolic men were still alive and over them to ordain and to govern. Henceforth a presbyter, with only the normal power of a presbyter, had not, in any emergency, the power to ordain which belonged only to the bishop. Jerome, who, among the fathers, sought to gain acceptance for the view described above, or something essentially like it, and who on the basis of this view minimized the difference between bishop and presbyter, yet never doubted as to the limitation of the presbyter's powers, as the presbyter was in his own day and had been for many a generation. 'What,' he asks, 'does the bishop

do which the presbyter cannot do, *except ordination*?'[1] The earlier canons of Hippolytus express the same view as Jerome's. 'The bishop is in all respects to be on the same level as the presbyter, except in the matter of the chief seat and in ordination, for the power of ordaining is not granted to him (the presbyter).'[2]

These Scottish divines appeal to catholic principles and church law, and on catholic principles and church law they have, it must be emphatically said, no case at all. The sixteenth-century presbyters who took part in ordaining the reformed pastors, to do them justice, do not seem to have claimed to do so because they were priests under the old succession; but if they had done so, they would have been claiming a power which, according to the undisputed mind of the church, they had never received.

I revert, then, to what is, I believe, 'the fundamental religious principle of the whole Reformation movement,' viz. the repudiation of the conception that authority to minister is given in the church only by devolution from above,

[1] See in the author's *Church and the Ministry*, pp. 125 f., and notes.

[2] l. c. pp. 132 f.

on the principle of succession to the original apostolic ministry. I believe that in repudiating this principle the Reformed churches were—with whatever excuse—repudiating a law of divine authority in the church, and also an essential principle of the church's continuous life.

We must recognize that upon the basis of this rebellion there have arisen Christian churches with a noble and continuous record of spiritual excellence—exhibiting, both in individuals and corporately, manifest fruits of the Spirit alike in learning, in virtue, and in evangelical zeal. To deny God's presence with them, and His co-operation in their work and ministry, would seem to me to approach to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We cannot express in words too strong our assurance that God has been with them, and that we are meant to learn from their saints and teachers, and to sit at their feet as before those who possess God's spirit.

And if I am asked how I can explain this on my own principles, which compel me to regard them as rebels against a divine law, I would answer that they were not only rebels against a divine law: they were vigorously and

bravely vindicating divine principles at the same time. And the principles which they were vindicating, especially the principle of the supremacy of Scripture in the church against the corruption of tradition, and the principle of human liberty against spiritual tyranny, are such divine principles—are principles so certainly Christian—that when the vindication of these principles carried them on, in some cases regretfully and under the pathetic plea of necessity, even to the neglect of a fundamental and divine law of Christian fellowship, the apostolic succession, I cannot even so forget what they were vindicating. It is upon their vindication of true principles—upon their passionate love of Scripture and their strong claim for spiritual liberty—that I seem to see the divine blessing resting.

But if any one were to say that God seems therefore to have condoned the breach of the law, the fundamental irregularity in the origin of the Reformed churches, on account of their zeal for the truth, I should ask leave to qualify this reflection or judgement in two ways.

I should ask him to notice that the appeal to spiritual results as giving sanction to an initial

'irregularity' cannot stop with the case of the first Reformed churches or their lineal successors. This appeal applies to no body more conclusively than to the Society of Friends, who reject the most indisputable ordinances of Christ, baptism and the eucharist. It applies in our own time to the Salvation Army, who do the like. It applies perhaps to some movements which own no exclusive allegiance to the name of Christ. Thus the argument from good fruits can indeed be used to prove that God is not tied to His own ordinances; but it cannot be used to destroy the authority of these ordinances, if there is to remain any standard of institutions of Christ which we are constrained to maintain, or to which we are bound to recur.

But also I should ask him to notice—and on this I would lay the greatest stress—that if God has abundantly and plainly poured His blessing upon Protestant churches, He has also been most certainly teaching them, and teaching mankind generally, by the slow evidence of experience, that there was something fundamentally wrong about the Reformation movement. In other words, I think that the churches which owe their origin to the Reformation do, in their

corporate character, bear more and more plainly the appearance of societies which have broken a fundamental law of catholic fellowship. On this point I will endeavour to enlarge.

1. We are getting tired of sectarianism. The Reformation on its revolutionary side broke the visible structure of catholic Christianity, and resulted in national Protestant or Reformed churches. And these original separations have been the prelude to a whole world of sects; each of which has justified itself by the conviction that the body from which it broke was corrupted by some abuse which conscience did not allow it to tolerate, or would not give free scope to something which it was sure was a word of God. Our Protestant fathers of a generation or two ago seem to have viewed this multiplication of sects, if not with complacency, at any rate with no serious misgivings as to the principles of 'the glorious Reformation'. But an extraordinary change is apparent. Evangelical divines, historians, and men of letters, are looking back wistfully to the days of the catholic fellowship, and are asking whether Protestantism was not a passing phase. I would quote only two examples:—

'I began,' says Paul Sabatier,[1] by loving the church without much knowing why, which is perhaps the best way of loving. I love it as one loves his mother and his country. If however I wished to search for some of the reasons of this mysterious attachment, one of the first would be, doubtless, the unity of the church. It committed, it is true, many mistakes and crimes, but that stream of solidarity and unity, which it has summed up so well in the word "catholic", does it not constitute the prophetic programme of the society which we would prepare for, and towards which, by different roads but with a like ardour, the classes of labour and the classes of intellect of the twentieth century are alike making their way?'

And the American divine, Newman Smyth, in his *Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism*,[2] after dwelling on the original justification, as it seems to him, of the Protestant schisms, continues :—

'It is, however, another and an altogether different question whether a present schism may not be wrong although a past schism may have been right. It is an open question how long a schism can be continued without unreason and sin. And it is even a more searching question whether a separation which formerly was necessary may not have left, together with its unquestioned blessings, an inherited temper of schism, which, lurking in the blood, lingering too long in the habits, and betraying itself in the pride of a church, remains as a menace to the religious hope of the world.

[1] *Lettre Ouverte* (Paris, 1907), p. xiii.
[2] Hodder and Stoughton, 1908; pp. 30–1.

Hence it has come to pass that the Protestantism of to-day is met by a call to confess its sin against the unity of Christ's church. A clear recognition on the part of all non-Roman churches of their part and share in this evil is the first condition of effectual repentance of it. If, as on our part we must continue to maintain, an absolute Papacy, subversive of the historic episcopate, as it has been destructive of the original democracy of the church, is a sin against the Holy Spirit of liberty, equally and by the same sign, an absolute independency is a sin against the Holy Spirit of communion. Both are a sin against the Holy Spirit of education. Persistence in either without repentance, and at the sacrifice of the very life of the Christ among men, might prove to be the modern sin without forgiveness against the Holy Ghost.'

If it is indeed true that our Lord intended His disciples to be 'one in a visible fellowship',[1] if the maintenance of this fellowship was meant to be the instrument for the discipline of human waywardness and narrowness, it is hardly possible to exaggerate what we have lost. Where Protestantism is the prevailing influence, people pass from one church to another, as they are attracted by this preacher or that, this service or that, without any constraining sense of obligation to one body. What sense of fellowship in the one family of Jesus Christ binds our artisans to our employers to-day

[1] See appended note at the end of the chapter.

in England or in America? What sense of catholic fellowship in the worship of fellow Christians abroad possesses the minds of Englishmen as they collect themselves in a foreign hotel for the English service? What prevailing force in international politics has the name of Christendom to-day? The religious imagination of the world, at its best and deepest moments, is now again haunted by the vision of the ancient unity, by the sense that Christ meant to gather men of all nations and classes into one family. And as they look back at the period of the Reformation, the old enthusiasm is gone, and they ask whether, after all, when they thought they were destroying the temple of Baal, the Reformers were not really pulling down the walls, however much defaced, of the House of the Lord.

2. But while we see this rekindling of the aspiration towards religious unity, we see also, and more markedly, the breaking down and weakening of the positive and distinctive types of Protestantism. The progress of this weakening process is most marked. What force in Europe to-day is dogmatic Lutheranism, or the definite religion of Calvinism? How rapidly

the distinctiveness of Baptist or Congregationalist or Methodist is merging in the common undenominational type of religion! How few of our Nonconformist churches are really preaching the distinctive religion of their trust deeds! The fact of this weakening and merging process is undeniable. And one special feature of the process is most conspicuous. The old Protestant orthodoxy stood by the sole and final authority of the Bible as the infallible word of God. But it is exactly this position of the Bible which modern knowledge is making more and more impossible. It is not only that the simple infallibility of the record is completely undermined, but it has become evident that the Bible cannot stand alone. The books of the New Testament are products of the church. They were plainly written for those who were already members of the church, and had been taught by the church the rudiments of their religion. As written, the books proceed from the church, are for the church, and bear witness to the church. Moreover, the documents which are included in the canon are separated by no gulf from those just outside it. The Acts of the Apostles, for instance, and the

Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pastoral Epistles lead us on immediately to the Epistle of Clement and the Epistles of Ignatius in the unbroken life of one continuous society. The same society, for the purposes of its spiritual work, at the same date formulates its creed, proclaims its succession of bishops, and begins to draw up its canon of sacred books. You can very rightly exalt the canon of Scripture, as the church did, as giving the original and authentic form of the apostolic preaching; and you can make it the basis and standard of doctrine. But you cannot reasonably isolate the New Testament from the creed or the episcopal successions, and assert the authority of the one, while you repudiate that of the others: or in particular assert the authority of the first the while you repudiate that of the third.[1]

There are of course those who, like Adolf Harnack, can still feel enthusiasm for a Christian faith which does not profess to be the

[1] This is very ably argued by one who writes more or less from the point of view of Rudolph Sohm—E. C. Moore, Professor of Theology in Harvard University: see his *New Testament in the Christian Church* (Macmillan, 1904), Lectures VI and VIII.

ancient historical creed—which ignores miracles and has no dogma but the fatherhood of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is possible to look forward, like Dr. Denney,[1] to a union of Christians under such a *formula concordiae* as 'I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only son our Lord'—thus leaving out of the creed all mention of miracles, or of the Holy Trinity. I have tried elsewhere[2] to argue the great question of what the necessary Christian faith really is, and to give reasons for believing that the real power of the gospel over our stubborn, wayward, wilful human nature depends on our maintaining the full faith of the creed. What I am saying now would not appeal to those who agree with Harnack or Denney. What I am now pointing out is that the faith of the creed, which is undoubtedly also the faith of the New Testament taken as a whole, is no abstract position. It is the witness of the church catholic, which formed its creed and proclaimed its canon of apostolic scriptures, and also and even earlier proclaimed the

[1] Dr. Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), pp. 398 ff.

[2] See *The New Theology and the Old Religion* (Murray, 1907).

succession of its bishops as the necessary constituent of its own structure. Logic works among men slowly but surely. I think it will be increasingly difficult to maintain the creed, or Scripture as a standard of apostolic doctrine, torn asunder from the rest of the church's witness. This is to say, in other words, that the old standard of Protestant orthodoxy is being discredited. There were, no doubt, perceptible differences in the attitude of the Reformers towards Holy Scripture. There are words of Luther and other Reformers which no doubt sanction the position[1] that the Bible *is* not, but *contains* the word of God, and that what is 'word of God' in the Bible must be determined by the individual conscience. But Protestantism in becoming an established institution developed its own orthodoxy; and its orthodoxy rested upon the Bible, maintained as a whole and as infallible, and isolated from the authority of the historical church. It is this position, I believe, that is invalidated, never to be recovered. It will become increasingly evident that in attempting to set up the isolated Bible as the infallible standard of religion,

[1] See Moore, l. c., pp. 197 ff.

Protestantism was attempting the impossible, and violating a fundamental law of the Christian religion, which holds Bible and creed and episcopate indissolubly together.

II

There are not a few independent spectators of the difficulties of Protestantism and of the Anglican Church who believe, and keep us informed, that with the deepening failure of Protestant orthodoxy, the great Roman communion is the 'residuary legatee' of positive Christianity. This again is a great question which must be argued out elsewhere. The conclusion which seems to me increasingly evident is that the Roman communion is a great and wonderful part of the Christian church, with a wonderful power of recovery and expansion, and, in moral and administrative matters, a wonderful power of self-reform. It is astonishing, if you read Calvin's denunciations of the Roman Church in his *Institutes*,[1] to reckon how many of the abuses which he denounces have been completely remedied. But it is equally evident, at least to the present

[1] Book iv. 5.

writer, that the Roman development of Christianity is a one-sided development: because it exaggerates and intensifies, with strange disregard of ancient and catholic restraints, the principle of centralized government and sacerdotal authority and dogma. If Romanism is the only catholic Christianity, then undoubtedly Christianity has become narrowed as it has come down the ages, and excludes whole types of character and thought, which once it welcomed and included, and which find their constant support in the New Testament.

Formally our appeal against the Roman pretension is (1) to the fact that the Eastern church never did accept the Papal claim, in general or in detail; and that, as a matter of fact, therefore, we cannot allow to it the kind of catholicity which belongs to the creed, the sacraments, the episcopate and the Bible. Our appeal is (2) to the principle, thoroughly recognized and assured in the church of the Fathers, of the supremacy of Scripture as the testing-ground of doctrine.[1] This means that

[1] I have sought to elaborate these points in the *Roman Catholic Claims* (Longmans, tenth edition, 1909). I cannot give entire assent to the principles of Fr. Tyrrell's *Through Scylla and Charybdis* (Longmans, 1907). But he expresses

the substance of the faith was 'once for all delivered' and declared in the first apostolic preaching of the gospel: that it is the function of the church to protect and propagate this faith, but that it has no commission to reveal or enforce new truth. For example: it may be so reasonable to believe in a purgatory for the imperfect after death, that our intelligence may feel no doubt about it. Again, there may be no objection to our asking for the prayers of the departed, as we ask for the prayers of the living, if we can have direct access to them. Once more, there exists a logical process, which some people find cogent, conducting to a belief in the immaculate conception of Mary. But inasmuch as the doctrine of purgatory as a place or state after death, and the direct accessibility of the saints, and the fact of Mary's sinless conception were demonstratively not part of the original

admirably the distinction between theology which develops and revelation which does not. 'I assume, with the Fathers, that the revelation given through Christ by His apostles, apart from any subsequent theological reflection, contained all that was needful for the fullest life of faith, hope, and charity. . . . I find no difficulty whatever in accepting literal (not merely implicit) apostolicity, in the patristic sense, as the criterion of faith, and cannot but regret that confusion of revelation with theology which seems to allow of a development in the deposit of faith' (pp. 324–5).

faith, and are not witnessed to in the New Testament, they can never become a legitimate part of the dogmatic furniture of the church: never become part of the faith which the church can teach as the word of the Lord, or can present as a condition of ministry or membership. The appeal to Scripture is the safeguarding of the church against the accumulation of dogmas, and the guarantee of individual liberty.

If Romanism cannot be accepted as the whole of catholic Christianity, and the Eastern churches do not claim more than their own territory, and the Protestant Reformation, so far as it broke with the structure of the catholic church, violated a divine law which in the course of time increasingly vindicates itself, then the Anglican communion, for all its defects and shortcomings, has a great vocation. Our communion is much criticized and disliked—not without cause. But there is also a wonderful convergence of interest in it, among those who ponder the problem of unity and who cannot believe that the Roman spirit is the whole spirit of Christianity.

The Anglican Church in God's providence—and there is perhaps no more marked action of

divine providence in history—preserved the whole of the ancient catholic structure, both creed and Bible, sacraments and order, beyond the reach of legitimate objection; and it coupled this conservatism with a repudiation of the supreme authority of the Pope, and a whole-hearted acceptance of the principle of the doctrinal supremacy of Scripture. This gives it, with all its faults, sins and deficiencies, a unique opportunity for developing and presenting a really liberal catholicism, such as, in view of the dim future, is the world's best hope for religious unity. But our church has first of all to repent: it has to recall its unhappy surrender to the state of the necessary functions of spiritual government: it has to reassert and revive the obligations of membership, after years during which it has suffered membership of the nation practically to stand in place of membership of the church: it has to suffer all the judgement it deserves, in whatever form it comes, for the long-continued alliance of the clergy with the rich or the 'upper classes'—for having approached the poor as from above, in the spirit of patronage: it has to restore the proportions of Christian faith

and worship—not least in respect of the place and dignity of the holy eucharist. In all this process of repentance and recovery it will have constantly to look beyond its own border, and to learn not only from Roman and Greek catholics, but from reformed bodies—the Scotch Presbyterians and the English Nonconformists —and to recover portions of the broken body of truth in all quarters.

Nevertheless, in spite of all sins and shortcomings, there lies with us a signal opportunity and responsibility as the home and nursing-ground of a liberal catholicism, a catholicism which limits its properly dogmatic authority carefully and thankfully by the blessed restriction of Scripture. And I am sure that the first and chief contribution which we can make to the cause of unity, as it may present itself in the unknown future, is by strengthening our own witness: by making the Anglican communion more worthy of its opportunity, and more intelligible to the world. The elements of this work of internal recovery are, I believe, chiefly these:—

1. We must strengthen the obligation of membership in the church, as distinct from

the state or from society, at all points, unhesitatingly preferring reality to numbers, according to the method of Christ, and the explicit intention of the Prayer Book.

2. We must make as explicit and well understood as possible the definite obligations contracted by the clergy, when they make their constantly renewed declaration of assent[1] to the doctrine of the Church of England as agreeable to the word of God: when, as

[1] We clergy are very frequently told that we have 'to sign the Articles'; and we are supposed somehow to satisfy our consciences with having signed them, and to pay scant attention to them. In fact, we never sign the Articles. Up to 1867 the clergy were, with other people, required to say that they 'willingly and *ex animo* acknowledged all and every of the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the Ratification, to be agreeable to the word of God'. But the combined authority of church and state altered this form in 1867, and since that date we have only given a general assent to the doctrine of the Church of England as contained in the three documents—the Articles, the Prayer Book, and the Ordinal—all together, and declared it to be scriptural. It is therefore not at all fair for any one within or without the Church to claim of any officer of the church that he has 'subscribed to' each particular phrase of Articles or Prayer Book. The main doctrinal obligation of the clergy lies in the constant recitation as leaders of the people of the precise and definite creeds 'I believe', and the constant use of catechism and services. I have endeavoured to argue the matter more at length in a charge, called *Spiritual Efficiency* (Murray, 1904), and the *New Theology*, pp. 161 ff.

leaders of the people, they regularly recite the solemn and definite creeds with the words 'I believe': and when they publicly and precisely bind themselves 'in public prayer and administration of the sacraments to use the forms in the Prayer Book prescribed and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority'. These obligations are, up to a certain point, plain and explicit. They belong properly to a church which unhesitatingly maintains the catholic creeds and holy orders, which acknowledges the doctrinal supremacy of Scripture, and which accepts unambiguously the sacramental mind and method of the ancient church; but which leaves very large room for schools of thought, for open discussion, and for the gradual formation and change of opinion on all subjects where the church has provided us with no ecumenical decision or requirement. In fact, the existence of markedly different schools of thought in the ancient and undivided catholic church was very marked — the differences, for example, in eucharistic doctrine very great. And there is not the slightest reason in the nature of things why this condition of toleration and

inclusiveness should not be regarded as an ideal to be recovered. But, in a visible church based on a specific divine revelation, the intelligibility and attractiveness of toleration can only be maintained where the basis of necessary faith is also clearly and unhesitatingly affirmed—where the church knows how to say as distinct a 'no' to proposals which threaten its fundamental unity, as ever it did in the days of Montanism or Arianism.[1]

3. We must labour, unhastingly but unrestingly, to claim for the church at all costs its essential liberty to bind and to loose in spiritual matters, that is, to exercise its own legislative and disciplinary rights, as given by Christ to His church.

4. We need to have more clearly in view, than we have had in the past, the fact that in the earliest church there was the institution of prophecy side by side with the official and regular ministry. There is of course no external definition of true prophecy possible. Certainly prophecy cannot be allowed a lawless power to disintegrate the church. But the natural tendencies of an official hierarchy lead it to

[1] See further below, chap. vii.

dislike and resent the consequences of any new and disturbing light: it dislikes to have its conduct of affairs called in question by lay teachers. It needs to be on its guard against this narrowness. We should expect from age to age men to arise with something of prophetic power, to teach truth which the church is neglecting, and be evangelists of those whom the church is failing to win. Schisms in the past have been due, we cannot but believe, to the official church refusing to give free scope to men who were certainly not without spiritual inspiration. It ought by this time to have learned its lesson, and to be ready in the future to give a welcome to any teachers of half-forgotten truths, who can make a legitimate appeal to Scripture, and are reasonably submissive to the discipline of membership. The one altar and the one ministry are quite compatible with a very free exercise of spiritual gifts like those of the apostolic age, which we may see renewed in any other.

We may feel quite sure that by far the most important contribution we can make to the cause of unity among Christians in the future is by developing the strength and meaning of

our own communion. The logic of event works slowly; but the decay of the distinctive forms and barriers of Protestantism, and the rise of national Christian churches in Africa and China and Japan and India may, nay must, produce a profound change in the religious situation. The world's need of a liberal catholicism will surely become increasingly apparent. And what doom should not we deserve if we of the Church of England had failed to make its possibility and its reality apparent?

When we look beyond our borders, and ask ourselves what we ought to be doing towards the recovery of Christian communion, I do not think that we shall be encouraged to believe that any project of 'corporate reunion' is at all near to realization at present. But if we repent, each within his own communion, of our sins against unity and the shortcomings of our own part of the church, we shall lose our narrowness. We shall become conscious how far our own communion is from having or being all that is catholic. We shall see how much others have to teach us. We shall seek to know more about other communions, laying aside any remains or

traces of pride or self-sufficiency or contempt. When we go abroad as visitors, we shall make it our religious interest and duty, as far as is compatible with 'making our communions', to associate ourselves with the religious worship of the country we are travelling in. So far as we are students, we shall do our best to avail ourselves of and to promote the communism in theological science which already exists. At home we shall make the most of our opportunities of co-operation with Nonconformists for social and philanthropic objects. We shall not only pray ourselves, but join with our fellow-Christians in prayer, wherever we can on really neutral ground, for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ. But we shall be very chary of doing anything which promotes the prevalent undenominational spirit. To use the very ugly words, for which, however, there is no substitute, interdenominational action is permissible, but not what is undenominational. We should encourage all men to be as definitely and consistently as possible members not only of the church of Christ in general, but also of the particular body to which in good conscience they

belong. The Christianity from which nothing can grow is the Christianity which ignores the obligation of definite membership and a definite creed.

I do not attempt to decide what an officer of the Church of England may or may not, consistently with his loyalty to his own church, do for or among members of other communions. But of this I am quite sure, that whatever he may think it right to do, so far as his own judgement goes, he should ask himself before he does it what its effect will be on his own communion. It is, I am persuaded, in the making our own communion more coherent and more intelligible that our real contribution to the cause of unity must for the present lie.

It is much more than waste of time for adherents of different religious parties in the Anglican communion to seek a cheap advantage by calling attention to the faults or mistakes of other parties. We have all been foolish, we have all sinned. But I venture to believe that the call to us now is to assert our agreement in the maintenance of the creeds and episcopal order, and the doctrinal supremacy of Scripture, and the intelligent and intelligible

use of the Prayer Book and the catechism; and on the basis of this agreement to be deliberately tolerant, so far as the maintenance of public discipline goes, of ceremonial differences, and doctrinal differences on secondary matters; and to labour patiently for the recovery of the church's spiritual liberties and the removal of practical abuses.

APPENDED NOTE.

Four years ago the following letter was addressed to the ministers of all the Christian communities in England. I think it is worth while rescuing it from oblivion. It has been reprinted more than once with 'invisible' in place of 'in visible' so as completely to alter the sense. I have therefore ventured to introduce an 'a' between 'in' and 'visible' in brackets.

Dear Brother,

We, who subscribe this letter, represent widely different Christian communities. We agree in deprecating at present any large schemes of corporate reunion, which seem to us premature, or any attempts to treat our existing religious divergences as unimportant; but we agree, also, in believing profoundly that our Lord Jesus Christ meant us to be one in [a] visible fellowship; we feel profoundly the paralysing effect upon the moral forces of Christianity which our

divisions inevitably produce; and we recognize with the fullest conviction that it is the duty of all Christians, who desire in this respect the fulfilment of the divine purpose, to give themselves to penitence and prayer—to penitence because we have all, in various ways, as bodies and as individuals, contributed to produce and perpetuate differences; and to prayer because what we all alike need is that God should open our minds and hearts to receive without prejudice the gradual revelation of His will as to the ways by which we are to be drawn together.

Being so far agreed, we are venturing, not we believe without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to approach, as far as we can, all the Christian ministers of religion in England to ask them to prepare their congregations for a united effort of prayer on Whit Sunday next, at the principal Morning Service, for the re-union of Christians—special care being taken that such prayer should be entirely uncontroversial and should involve no assumptions except those which all Christians can make their own, viz. :—

That our Lord meant us to be one in [a] visible fellowship :

That our existing divisions hinder or even paralyse His work :

That we all deserve chastisement, and need penitence, for the various ways in which we have contributed to produce or promote division :

That we all need open and candid minds to receive light and yet more light, so that, in ways we perhaps as yet can hardly imagine, we may be led back towards unity.

We believe that by these solemn exercises of penitential devotion dispositions may be created and nourished which will do much to end the needless embitterment so frequently pervading our differences of judgement and creed ; and that

a freer way may be prepared for the Divine purpose to realize itself.

GEO. E. BUTT,
President of the Primitive Methodist Conference.
RANDALL CANTUAR:
T. J. DICKINSON,
President of the United Methodist Free Churches.
WILLELM. EBOR:
J. H. JOWETT,
Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.
C. H. KELLY,
President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.
J. B. MEHARRY,
Moderator Elect of the English Presbyterian Church.
F. B. MEYER,
President of the Baptist Union.
A. J. MILNE,
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.
ROBERT RAINY,
Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland.
F. J. ROBINSON,
President of the Methodist New Connexion Church.
GEORGE ST. ANDREWS:
Primus of the Scottish Church.

C. BIRMINGHAM:
J. H. JOWETT } *Secretaries.*

CHAPTER VII

THE PERIL OF DRIFTING [1]

'Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.' Gal. i. 8, 9.

'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent.' Phil. i. 9, 10.

THE vehement but deliberate utterance of S. Paul which I first read to you is unwelcome to our modern spirit. It says a determined *no*; it excludes, and requires others to exclude, as an accursed thing, a certain type of Christian teaching, which at the moment was becoming popular in the Galatian churches, and which S. Paul judged to be a fundamental perversion of the teaching they had at first received. Thus he requires them to exclude both the teach-

[1] A sermon preached before the University of Cambridge in Great S. Mary's Church, on May 2, 1909.

ing and also its practical consequence—the encouragement of the Jewish practice of circumcision among Gentile Christians. S. Paul is ready enough, in this very epistle, to speak of circumcision in itself as a thing indifferent. 'Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision.' But the thing, in itself indifferent, may be made the symbol of something really false. It embodies a false principle and it cannot be treated as indifferent. Thus, 'if ye be circumcised,' he says, 'Christ shall profit you nothing.'

Nor do these utterances of S. Paul in this Epistle stand alone. S. Paul's conception of Christian communion is, I would say, very broad. He is really, in his ideals, catholic or comprehensive. On the basis of a common faith and in the fellowship of the one body, with its sacraments of brotherhood, S. Paul not merely tolerates, but glories in diversity. The breaking down of middle walls of partition is congenial to him. He loves to say, about matters which he judges secondary and not essential, 'Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind,' 'one in this way and another in that.' He would have Christians 'receive

one another' in spite of differences 'as Christ' had already 'received' them, all alike, into His family. But this broad and comprehensive spirit of S. Paul is quite compatible with, nay, proceeds out from, such a clear grasp of Christian principles, as intellectually positive, that when an idea, or a tendency, or a claim, or a practice is seen to contradict these *principles*, S. Paul is found claiming its exclusion. He is found drawing a line, and saying, 'This doctrine or practice is and must remain outside.' This definitive, and, when necessary, exclusive, attitude, which, as I say, is so repugnant to our feelings, in a generation when we seem almost to have lost the power of saying a clear *no*, makes itself manifest in each group of S. Paul's Epistles, especially in the Galatians, Corinthians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles. It is a vital part of S. Paul's mind and method.

I have traced it to S. Paul's perception of principle. S. Paul's language does not remind us of the language which has been customary in many ages of the church. 'The church teaches so and so: it is your part only to accept what the divinely authorized teacher says, and to exclude, as accursed, what she does not

sanction.' We can indeed conceive S. Paul on a matter of practice claiming conformity simply on the ground of order. 'We have no such custom;' 'keep the tradition.' But we cannot conceive S. Paul being content to enforce truth in this manner. At least he never does so. Confronted with false doctrines, he argues: he demonstrates: he confutes: he appeals to facts and principles. I think we are not mistaken in saying that S. Paul is afraid of the method of law or the assertion of mere authority, because of its paralysing effect on spiritual initiative and responsibility. He shrinks from enforcing truth as a form of law. He appeals to principles, intellectually conceived, to admit and also to exclude.

We would not call in question the truth that S. Paul's Christian knowledge and perception were a gift of the Holy Ghost: or that his was a special gift accompanying his special or indeed unique vocation; but it was a gift of which he had made the best by diligence. I think it is commonly forgotten what a large space for meditation and reflection is left by the incidents of S. Paul's life after his conversion. Before his conversion we imagine him holding a simple

dogmatic position, clinging to an authoritative system loyally and zealously accepted from his fathers, but disturbed all the while by profound misgivings. The vision of Christ shattered the old dogmatic position, by setting on the throne of his being the rejected and crucified prophet, Jesus, as the Christ. He had now this single conviction—that Jesus was the Christ: and he bears his strenuous witness to his changed mind first at Damascus and a few years later for not more than a fortnight at Jerusalem. This preliminary witness to his new faith was inevitable. But ten years at least intervened between his conversion and the moment when Barnabas fetched him from Tarsus to Antioch to begin his work as the teacher of the Gentiles. At the beginning of those ten years you have the retirement to Arabia: the last seven were in retirement (as far as we know) at Tarsus. Some missionary work in the churches of Cilicia there may have been. But it seems to have made little mark. On the whole we suppose these years to have been years of preparation. In the city of Tarsus, where S. Paul was a Jew among Jews, and also a Roman citizen, and in a thoroughly Greek city, characterized by

intense indigenous philosophic life (as Strabo tells us) which S. Paul could not have ignored, we must picture him preparing for his work, which was to be both Jewish and Roman and Greek. We must think of him re-reading his old Jewish Bible in the light of his new faith: thinking out his theory of law and grace: meditating the meaning of Christ's divine sonship: the significance of His resurrection, and of the mission of the Spirit and of the church as Christ's organ in the world. Surely it is this background of persistent and profound meditation which accounts for the wonderful steadiness of S. Paul's intellectual developments during his years of stress and strain. There is development. There is self-correction. But in the main the principles upon which he is to draw are there distinctly held from the first. They are plain enough in the two epistles, that to the Galatians and the first to the Corinthians. All the armoury of weapons is there already forged. His intellectual equipment has been prepared before he goes out to his great task. His love had abounded into knowledge: therefore he can so decisively say 'yes' or 'no'. Therefore he can pass so freely through all the

subtle and vehement intellectual conflicts of his life—so freely, with so sure a foot, with such splendid decisiveness, with such grand intellectual consistency.

We might have endeavoured, if time had allowed, to consider, from this point of view, the kinship of S. Paul and S. John, a kinship in spite of marked unlikeness of mind and method. We might have observed how S. John's brooding meditation results in luminous principles of judgement, which, for him also, become principles of discrimination, and force him, the apostle of love, to try the spirits, and repudiate a rising type of teaching as proceeding from the spirit of anti-Christ, and bid the faithful receive not the false teachers into their houses nor give them God-speed. We might have gone on to note periods of the church's history, when on the whole the church as a body has been, like S. Paul and S. John, conscious of its own intellectual principles, has appealed to principles, and has used them to discriminate between modes of thought or current terms of philosophy which it could assimilate and use, and modes of thought or terms of philosophy which it must repudiate

and denounce. And we might have set in contrast to such periods others, when the doctrine of the church appears to be regarded as a law, rather than as an intellectual principle; and instead of faith being encouraged to develop into knowledge, its whole virtue is made to lie in obedience, and passive or undiscriminating acceptance of the voice of ecclesiastical authority.

But we must omit all this, and bearing in mind only S. Paul's method and example, let us pass to our own time, and recalling what has been already alluded to—our marked unwillingness and inability decisively to reject, as anti-Christian, any fashion of thought which professes the name of Christ—let me ask you to consider whether this absence of the power of discrimination and decisive rejection is not due in large measure to our refusal to think: to our singularly inadequate apprehension of Christian principles: to the fact that we do not from the standing-ground of faith in the divine word grow up into an intellectual apprehension of the meaning of our religion—that our love does not abound in knowledge: but that on the contrary we are in general taking refuge in philanthropy

and good works from the requirement of thinking out our religious principles.

Consider first the area of the Christian world which we should broadly call Protestant.

Orthodox Protestantism has received a series of intellectual shocks, the seriousness of which it is impossible to exaggerate. Its staple doctrines were the doctrines of the depravity of our fallen nature: the certainty of everlasting punishment for the unregenerate: the efficacy of Christ's vicarious sacrifice: justification by individual faith: and the infallibility of Scripture as the written word of God. Now it does not need to be shown at length, for every one will admit it, that it is precisely these points of Protestant orthodoxy which have suffered most in the intellectual movement of the last fifty years. It is commonly said, and the exaggeration at least represents the truth, that the doctrine of the depravity of our fallen nature, and the doctrine of everlasting punishment are now barely heard in the Protestant pulpits of America and England to-day: that the doctrine of the atonement, as the Calvinist taught it, is, of all doctrines, the one against which the modern mind has most decisively rebelled:

and that the position that everything which is in the Bible is true is the position which has been riddled by the shot and shell of criticism.

I am intentionally stating matters broadly, and without exact discrimination; and I am not estimating how far the existing reaction against old-fashioned doctrines is good or bad. But broadly the facts are as I have stated them in American Protestantism, and largely in English also. Now it is plain that there are individual thinkers and scholars who are seeking to meet this serious situation in the true way, by going back to the first principles, and striving to recover and restate the Christianity which is true and permanent; but, unless I am very much mistaken, the general tendency of Protestant Christians, including the ministers and teachers of religion, is to seek refuge from the difficulties of thought in the opportunities of philanthropic or evangelistic action. 'To evangelize the masses', 'to evangelize the world in this generation', 'to break down the barriers of sect and promote union among Christians': these are the watchwords of Evangelical Christianity to-day. Admirable watchwords, indeed! But how can you evangelize the masses unless you

have a definite doctrine to teach? All experience goes to show that the more ignorant or poor those whom you wish to evangelize, the more essential it is that you should have clearly expressed doctrines to teach and clearly defined duties of religion to inculcate. Otherwise your work is shallow, impermanent, or ineffective. The permanent and really influential religions of the poor are those of a definite creed and definite duties. How noble, again, the aspiration to evangelize the heathen world in this generation; but how can you hope to carry the Gospel effectively into the regions of Buddhism and Brahmanism and Mohammedanism, unless you have in full measure S. Paul's discriminating power to distinguish the true idea of God from the false; or to know what, in all this vast and subtle mass of traditions and customs, Christianity can assimilate, or, on the other hand, is bound to repudiate. Truly we must ask of one another what Joab asked of Ahimaaz: 'My son, wherefore wilt thou run, seeing thou hast no tidings ready?' Or once again, as to unity among Christians—does not any hope of a unity which is to be really effective and deep, depend on a thorough and general

apprehension of what are vital and necessary doctrines and what are secondary and variable? We must think, before we can start to act or to combine.

Consider the matter more definitely as it affects us to-day in England. We have propounded to us as Christian truth an idea of God which encourages men to say that Christ is God or is divine, and goes on to say that we all are God or portions of God. We have even more widely propounded to us the idea that Christianity can discard or discredit or depreciate the miracles which from the first have been accounted as among its credentials, credentials *because* miraculous, and still go on its way the same religion, only relieved of an intellectual incumbrance.

These are suggestions quite as momentous as the suggestions of Gnosticism or Arianism of old. It seems to me that it is nothing less than certain that there is no Christian body or association which can go on its way with any hope of fruitful action till it has gained the power of discrimination, by a knowledge of its own principles, to give some decisive answer to these suggestions.

It seems to me absolutely certain that, for example, a gospel which drops the idea of miracles, with their manifest implications of a free sovereignty of God in and over nature, and is content, more or less, to merge the thought of God in the order of nature, would produce in the long run a quite different sort of religion, a quite different attitude toward God and nature, a quite different character—from the traditional Christianity of the creeds and the Bible. In the long run, I say: for popular religious life as it appears at any particular moment is always so full of inconsistencies as to suggest little connexion between creed and conduct. But logic works in humanity in its long reaches. The fundamental ideas of Buddhism, or Christianity, or Mohammedanism, produce in the long run different kinds of character and civilization. In the long run, I say, the gospel which proclaims miraculous acts of God, interrupting His customary order in nature to fulfil a divine exigency of moral government, will produce a quite different kind of religious character from a gospel which is content to appeal only to God in nature. This is an intellectual question which cannot be evaded.

Once again, in the region of Christian organization, in view of the widespread aspiration after reunion, we are confronted with difficulties about the Christian ministry. The traditional idea of the succession to the apostolic ministry through the episcopate alone, is met on all sides with ridicule and denunciation. But among those who laugh or who denounce, there are very few who seem to face in any way the positive question: what kind of Christian organization are they prepared to recognize? Are we to require, as the language of some suggests, a ministerial succession through presbyters, such as would leave us accepting only some Presbyterians, and excluding from the organized church English Nonconformists generally? Or is the principle which it is proposed to accept that which maintains that the members of the baptized body are all essentially equal and can originate or reform their ministry at their discretion? And, if so, are we to accept all bodies which take their stand on the requirement of baptism, and to exclude the increasing number who leave baptism an open question? Or are all to be admitted who claim to teach the gospel of Christ if, like the Salvation Army, they appear

to do it very effectively? Are we to be content to say, 'They are known by their fruits'? What I am calling attention to is that the popular demand for the 'unity of the churches', while it abounds in denunciation of a certain traditional principle, does not appear to be at all conscious of the necessity, which is yet intellectually peremptory, for substituting another.

I have been speaking generally of Protestant Christians. When I turn to those who distinctively call themselves Catholics, it would be certainly true to say that their strength has lain in the definiteness of their principles. They have known definitely what they believed; and they have undoubtedly been able by the definiteness of their message to be in Christendom generally the evangelists and pastors of the poor. The wonderful progress of what is called the Catholic movement—the Tractarian movement, as it used to be called—in the Church of England has been certainly due to the fact that, at its inception, it was rooted and grounded in definite principles, and for many years its popular or evangelistic work was based upon, and constantly referred itself back to, a school of theologians and thinkers who lived in the

region of principles, and knew how to discriminate. But here, again, the tendency of our time to 'drift', and to let the exigencies of practical action draw us away from the necessities of thinking, are very apparent. Doctrines long current in catholicism—doctrines, for example, of purgatory and the invocation of saints—challenge the English Churchman. Is he going to hold to the specifically Anglican, and indeed also specifically ancient, claim that the validity of any doctrine, its right to take its place among the revealed doctrines of faith, is to be tested by an appeal to Scripture? This is beyond question a specific principle of the English Church, as reformed. On the other hand, the doctrines in question are doctrines which cannot make this appeal with any degree of success. Are we to hold to the test and declare these ideas to be no better than opinions, pious or perilous? Or are we to accept the doctrines, and practices which follow from them or have suggested them, on the authority of the church alone, as really part of the faith, and discard the test of Scripture? And, if so, where will the abandonment take us? Certainly in this matter, those in the

Church of England who love the name of catholic are allowing themselves to drift. There is no sign of the question being adequately faced. The exigencies of spiritual convenience are quite overmastering the obligation of any clear appeal to principle.

I have not been endeavouring to provide answers to great questions; I have only urged the necessity for facing the questions; I am pleading for intellectual courage; I am insisting that any Christian faith which rises, as S. Paul would have it, from faith to knowledge and perception, must acquire also that discrimination which can not only accept with mental conviction, but can also reject with frankness and decision.

We are all conscious of the strain of practical, social, and evangelistic problems which confront our generation. We need leaders of practical reform and practical Christianity. We need—ah! how much we need—men in the spirit and power of S. Francis of Assisi, and of Wesley—of Lord Shaftesbury or Elizabeth Fry. But, at least as much, we need one to come among us, and not least at our universities, in the spirit and power of Socrates to challenge our vague and

loose thinking; to pass through our regions of unsifted beliefs, of large and loose phraseology, of grand but indiscriminate enthusiasms, and press upon us the demand that we should know what we mean.

And do you say: but I am not a theologian. I am not capable of these difficult tasks of thinking. I am not even thinking of being a clergyman or a religious teacher. I reply: you or I may not have the gifts of a leader of thought; we may not have the vocation of an Athanasius or an Augustine, or a Hooker, or a Westcott. But the thoughts of all great thinkers need to be apprehended and assimilated by the ordinary man, if they are not to lose their effect. That is what S. Paul seems to claim. He seems to claim that all the Corinthian, or Colossian, or Roman, or Galatian Christians should set their minds to work, and learn not only what they believe, but why they must assert what they assert or reject what they reject. So I seem to see in the Christianity of the period of the Gnostic controversy and in the earlier period of the councils, that, under the leadership of great thinkers, there formed itself a corporate mind of the church. The general

body of Christians grew to appreciate the intellectual struggle, and to know, with, of course, varying degrees of intelligence, what they were affirming and what they were repudiating. It is such a corporate Christian philosophy—such principles of thought held in common by the whole body—that we need to-day and seem sorely to lack. I look back a generation or two, and I see in the Evangelical and Catholic movements in our own part of the church exactly such a corporate mind, a corporate intelligence pervading the whole of each movement. It is to this that I attribute in great measure the strength and effectiveness of each. They knew that evangelistic propagation is only effective on a basis of clear principles of acceptance and rejection. I seem to see in every great political, as well as religious movement, that its strength and real effectiveness begin when certain principles—intellectually conceived—as well as certain practical aims enthusiastically embraced, pass into the mind of its followers. We English, as a rule, hate the trouble of thinking. We prefer almost any other kind of trouble. But we cannot as Christians—even as laymen—excuse ourselves

from it. I have known the whole mental attitude of a good man of business altered by a self-denying and determined, and persevering effort to master even one really good book of theological principles. I do not deny that there are men who have—for the good of us all—the vocation to be sceptics. I remember one in this place of great name whom I knew to be a sceptic and a saint. But no one could ever allege the name of Henry Sidgwick to justify him in making the difficulty of attaining certainty in first principles an excuse for evading the labour of thinking, or the constant effort to attain the reasonable goal of conviction. And for the great majority of men and women, I am persuaded, the gift of certainty is not of such difficult attainment.

My point then is this. The act of faith in Christ is an act primarily of moral allegiance; it is the homage of the will. But it involves an intellectual as well as a moral decision. Our knowledge of divine things in this world is at the best, as S. Paul taught us, inadequate. We see in a mirror; a blurred reflection: the truth is conveyed to us in terms of intellectual perplexity never finally cleared up in this world.

But we must also contend with S. Paul that the implicit principles of Christian life and worship are principles valid for the intellect and of inestimable worth. Christ cannot be 'the way' and 'the life' unless He is also 'the truth'. The decision for Christ is not only a moral but also an intellectual decision. It is a determination, moreover, like every other determination, which is also a negation. We have to force ourselves to say the decisive 'no'. The 'Quicunque vult' may not, I cannot but think does not, express the principle with sufficient discrimination; but it expresses the true principle when it says that 'He that will be saved'—he that will share the great deliverance—'must thus think' as well as must thus feel and act. We must not, under any charming of pragmatist philosophers, adjure our intellectual birthright. And we must never forget that in the long reaches of human history those only affect vital and permanent changes who both know what they believe and why they believe, and who, like S. Paul, are prepared decisively to reject.

I must have before me young men whose dogmatic faith, brought from a religious home, has been shattered, as S. Paul's was shattered

on the road to Damascus: but who are disposed, unlike S. Paul, to effect no serious work of intellectual reconstruction, and to take refuge in social or practical interests from the difficulties of thought. Well, let them do so for a while. Let them leave Cambridge to go to some settlement in South London to confront our tremendous social problems. If they look below the surface they will feel, I think, more keenly amidst the masses of labouring and suffering manhood and womanhood, even than in Cambridge, that all social reforms will be vain that are not rooted in a religious creed, a definite faith in God and in human nature, and definite duties of church membership. But such fleeing from speculation to action, social and philanthropic, should be but a brief temporary expedient. The intellectual problem cannot be evaded. The intellectual reconstruction of faith must be attempted with profound sincerity and strenuous earnestness. We must trust our own minds. We must realize our own personal intellectual responsibility, using all the best lights that God has given us, not neglecting the consentient mind of Christendom. By the sense of our own moral needs, by the

experience of the past, by prayer, by study of evidence, by the fundamental faith that God cannot have mocked us by implanting in our being impracticable aspirations, by fellowship with the needs of common men, we, each for himself and each for others, must labour to let our love abound into knowledge and discrimination, till we too can test all things and approve things that are excellent: till we too can affirm, knowing what we affirm, and reject knowing what we reject. And may the Holy Spirit of truth be your guide into all the truth!

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